CSC Blueprint

An Integrated, Data-Driven Whole Child Model by Design

A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR SCHOOLS AND PARTNERS

Catholic Schools Collaborative

AUGUST 2026

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS COLLABORATIVE

Catholic Schools Collaborative (CSC) Blueprint

An Integrated, Data-Driven Whole Child Model by Design

Ellen P. Holton and Steve Johnson

August 2026

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CSC Blueprint: An Integrated, Data-Driven Whole Child Model by Design

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Purpose of This Blueprint

The CSC Blueprint preserves the experience, learning, and practical architecture developed by Catholic Schools Collaborative (CSC) through more than a decade of work with Catholic schools. It is intended for diocesan and school leaders, educational organizations, philanthropic partners, researchers, and practitioners seeking to understand how an integrated, data-driven Whole Child model can be designed, implemented, and strengthened over time.

This document serves both as an institutional record and an implementation resource. It describes the conditions CSC encountered; the model, systems, partnerships, and practices it developed; the evidence used to assess progress; and the leadership and organizational lessons that emerged. It is designed to help readers identify principles that may be transferable, components that require local adaptation, and the readiness, capacity, resources, and ownership necessary for responsible implementation.

The Blueprint is not a plug-and-play program or a claim that CSC's experience can be reproduced unchanged in every setting. It is an invitation to learn from the work: to use the tools and lessons with discernment, adapt them to local context, and build coherent systems that support students, educators, families, and school communities.

Acknowledgments

With Gratitude

To the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation

The CSC Blueprint and accompanying Legacy documents were underwritten through the generosity of the **Conrad N. Hilton Foundation**. CSC is deeply grateful for the Foundation's support in preserving the organization's learning and making its model, evidence, and practical tools available to future schools, dioceses, educational organizations, and partners.

This investment ensures that more than a decade of CSC experience, innovation, tested practices, and documented learning will continue to inform and strengthen Catholic education for years to come. By supporting the documentation and dissemination of CSC's work, the Foundation has helped create a lasting resource that enables educators and leaders to adapt, implement, and build upon CSC's approach in diverse communities.

The Foundation's partnership reflects a shared commitment to expanding educational opportunity, fostering excellence, and sustaining a legacy of impact that will benefit current and future generations of students and educators.

To Our Partners

CSC also extends its sincere gratitude to the school leaders, teachers, counselors, staff members, students, families, diocesan colleagues, university and expert partners, board members, philanthropic supporters, and CSC team members whose commitment, insight, generosity, and collaboration shaped this work.

The authors extend particular appreciation to the final Catholic Schools Collaborative team—**Vicente Bastidas, Jessica Caffey, Paula Mitchell, and Crisabel Parra**—whose leadership, expertise, commitment, and work helped carry CSC through its Capstone Year and bring more than a decade of learning to a thoughtful close. Their contributions, together with those of colleagues who served CSC throughout its history, are reflected throughout this Blueprint.

CSC extends its heartfelt gratitude to current Board members **Bruce G. Willison, Carrie Shea-Tilton, and Antonio Felix**, and former Board members **Michael Feeley and Susan Moley**, whose leadership and stewardship helped guide and sustain the organization’s work.

> *This Blueprint is both a reflection of and a tribute to the wisdom, generosity, and shared commitment of the many people and organizations who helped shape CSC's work. It is offered in the hope that their contributions will continue to strengthen Catholic education for generations to come.*

Executive Summary

The Need and CSC's Evolution

CSC began in 2012 as the Catholic Schools Consortium, a philanthropic vehicle created to leverage support for Los Angeles Catholic schools and monitor the impact of investment. After receiving nonprofit status in 2014 and becoming Catholic Schools Collaborative in 2016, the organization moved from separate pilot programs toward a coherent school-improvement strategy with dedicated leadership. The schools CSC sought to serve faced chronic under-resourcing, fragmented or outdated PK-8 curriculum, inconsistent assessment participation and data use, limited instructional-leadership infrastructure, uneven student supports, operational constraints, and unequal access to technology and expertise. The central need was not simply for more programs, but for greater coherence across the conditions students and schools needed to thrive.

An Integrated Model by Design

CSC's theory of change held that lasting improvement could not be produced by a single program or by attention to only one part of a school. Strong instruction had to be connected to capable leadership, collaborative educators, engaged families, supportive environments, and systems that enabled adults to understand and respond to students' needs. The SIMPLE™ Approach translated that premise into an integrated, site-infused, data-driven Whole Child model organized around four interdependent pillars: Leadership and Operational Vitality; Academic Excellence; Social-Emotional Supports; and Parent, Family, and Community Engagement. Data, technology, professional learning, operational support, partnerships, and philanthropic investment worked across the pillars as shared infrastructure rather than as separate initiatives.

From Separate Programs to Coherent Systems

CSC served as an architect of impactful partnerships: identifying needs, developing and bundling multi-school initiatives, securing and aligning resources, coordinating expert partners, supporting implementation, and evaluating progress. Leadership development, coherent curriculum and instruction, assessment systems, technology, student supports, professional learning, continuous-improvement cycles, and partnership management were connected within one operating model. Schools gained access to stronger materials, more reliable data, targeted intervention, professional support, and expertise that many could not have secured or managed alone. At the 2026 Capstone Celebration, CSC described the resulting shifts as movement from gaps to growth, scarcity to materials, guessing to knowing, inconsistency to fidelity, following to leading, fragmentation to coherence, patchwork to priority, and survival to a Whole Child focus.

Evidence of Impact

From 2017 through 2026, CSC documented 455,343 hours of impact: 227,044 hours supporting administrators and teachers and 228,299 hours directly benefiting students and parents. In the 2025-26 Capstone Year, 92 percent of teachers assessed through CSC fidelity measures were implementing targeted practices at or above the expected level. Across changing groups of schools and multiple measures, the evidence showed consistent patterns of growth in learning, belonging, and capacity. More students reached grade-level expectations, students who began behind made substantial progress, access to advanced mathematics expanded, and leaders and educators demonstrated stronger routines and ownership. Because participating schools and measures changed over time, these findings should be understood as case-study evidence—not as a single longitudinal study, proof of uniform success, or evidence that one program alone caused the results.

Lessons About Implementation and Sustainability

CSC's experience showed that coherence matters more than program volume. Leadership quality, staffing, readiness, authority, and school conditions establish the ceiling for implementation. CSC also learned that a comprehensive model requires more than heroic effort from a single principal: principal and instructional-leadership functions must both be explicitly resourced. Data can reveal needs and progress, but it cannot change practice without aligned curriculum, time, coaching, and follow-through. Capacity must be demonstrated through routines, decisions, fidelity, ownership, and continuity rather than inferred from participation. School ownership and financial self-sufficiency are also not the same: a school may own its leadership, instructional practice, and decisions while still requiring shared services, system-level investment, or continued philanthropic support. Progress is real, but permanence can be assessed only over time and through changes in leadership, staffing, funding, and context.

What This Blueprint Offers

The Blueprint preserves CSC's architecture, evidence, decisions, limitations, practical tools, and lessons so that future leaders can learn from the work without treating it as a plug-and-play package. Organizations should begin with a coherent theory of change, assess readiness before determining scope and pace, establish reliable academic and operational foundations, coordinate partners through a shared strategy, provide sufficient implementation support, and define ownership and continuing resource needs from the outset. Catholic, public, charter, independent, and higher-education organizations may find the principles and structures useful, but program choices, governance, funding, staffing, measures, and timelines must be adapted to local context. CSC did not demonstrate equivalent outcomes outside the settings in which it worked.

Part I - The Story

The schools CSC sought to serve were rooted in faith, community, and a belief in the promise of their children.

Chapter 1: The Need That Gave Rise to CSC

Catholic Schools Collaborative (CSC) was founded in 2012 as the Catholic Schools Consortium, an idea initiated by a group of philanthropic stakeholders who believed there was a place for a new vehicle through which funders could leverage their support of Catholic schools in Los Angeles. Their vision was to support school growth through coordinated investment while closely monitoring the measurable impact of philanthropic funding.

In 2014, the organization received nonprofit status. During its first two years of operation, the Consortium launched several pilot programs with a subset of schools. These early initiatives enabled the organization to begin building relationships with schools and partners, test potential areas of support, and gain experience managing programs across multiple school communities. The pilots operated as separate initiatives because the emerging organization did not yet have dedicated executive leadership or a unifying organizational strategy.

In 2016, the organization changed its name to Catholic Schools Collaborative and hired its founding Executive Director. This marked the beginning of a new phase: the transition from a philanthropic vehicle managing individual pilot programs to an organization with dedicated leadership, a defined mission, and an integrated strategy for school improvement.

The Educational Need

The schools CSC sought to serve faced challenges that could not be addressed through isolated programs alone. These included chronic under-resourcing; inconsistent or outdated curriculum; limited academic coherence across grades PK-8; incomplete assessment participation; data that was collected but not consistently understood or used; insufficient instructional-leadership capacity; limited social-emotional and behavioral

infrastructure; uneven family access to academic information; operational and financial constraints; and unequal access to technology, expert partners, and high-quality professional learning.

CSC came to understand that the core problem was fragmentation. Schools were often expected to improve through separate programs, short-term grants, or vendor relationships without the leadership, systems, time, staffing, and funding required to connect those efforts. The emerging organization needed a strategy capable of addressing the conditions surrounding children and schools as a whole.

The Early Consortium Pilot Programs

During its years as the Catholic Schools Consortium, the organization launched four pilot programs. Those initiatives remained part of the organization when it changed its name to Catholic Schools Collaborative and hired its founding Executive Director in 2016. They formed the starting portfolio from which CSC assessed what should be retained, redesigned, expanded, or concluded.

CSC's strategy was neither to discard this starting portfolio nor to preserve every pilot simply because it existed. Each initiative would be assessed against the needs of the schools and the integrated Whole Child vision: retain what was effective, transform what held promise, expand what could serve schools more broadly, and conclude what was misaligned or unable to produce sufficient value.

Among the early Consortium initiatives was a CMAST mathematics partnership with Loyola Marymount University operating in three schools. Although the program offered sophisticated mathematical content, its approach proved too advanced for many of the teachers responsible for implementation.

Another early Consortium initiative was an afterschool partnership with the University of Southern California Caruso Catholic Center serving three schools located within a two-mile radius of the university. Although the program served participating students, its geographic limitations prevented it from functioning as a network-wide strategy.

A bookkeeping pilot had been intended to strengthen school-site financial literacy but was directed primarily toward bookkeepers who already possessed much of the knowledge being taught. CSC transformed the initiative into financial-literacy training for administrators. The redesigned program prepared school leaders to read and analyze financial statements, develop and manage budgets, understand appropriate accounting structures, make informed financial decisions, and account properly for restricted revenue. Educational or technology fees collected for designated purposes, for example, had to be used for those costs rather than redirected toward salaries, utilities, or unrelated operating expenses.

The fourth Consortium pilot expanded CMAST through a three-school initiative known as the STEM Triangle. It brought the schools together around collaborative STEM learning and strengthened understanding of emerging industries and career pathways. One of the original sites sustained this focus throughout CSC’s work. Building on that foundation, CSC expanded STEM and STEAM awareness across additional schools and created opportunities for parent and family engagement through STEAM Nights.

Chapter 2: The Vision - An Integrated, Data-Driven Whole Child Model by Design

CSC’s Executive Director brought to the organization a vision for an integrated Whole Child model that had taken shape before her appointment. Grounded in prior whole school-improvement experience, the vision reflected a core conviction: lasting change could not be achieved through a single program, a narrow intervention, or attention to only one part of a school.

This vision was further informed by longitudinal research from the University of Chicago Consortium on School Research, which identified five essential and mutually reinforcing conditions associated with sustained school improvement: effective leaders, collaborative teachers, involved families, supportive environments, and ambitious instruction. Schools strong in at least three of the Five Essentials were approximately ten times more likely to demonstrate substantial improvement in reading and mathematics than schools weak in three or more.

These findings reinforced CSC's understanding that children's academic success is shaped by the full set of conditions surrounding them—and that strong instruction depends upon coherent systems that enable adults to understand and respond to students' needs. Combined with prior school-improvement experience, this understanding informed the development of SIMPLE™—the Site-Infused Model for Personalized Learning Environments—CSC's integrated Whole Child model organized around four interdependent pillars:

- Leadership and Operational Vitality
- Academic Excellence
- Social-Emotional Supports
- Parent, Family, and Community Engagement

The Four-Pillar model was integrated by design. It recognized that meaningful and sustained school improvement required each area to be strengthened in connection with the others.

Leadership and Operational Vitality addressed the leadership, decision-making, adult capacity, financial health, organizational practices, and operational systems required for a school to function effectively and sustain improvement.

Academic Excellence encompassed coherent curriculum, instruction, assessment, data use, professional learning, and the systems needed to ensure that students experienced rigorous, evidence-based learning across grades PK-8.

Social-Emotional Supports recognized that students' academic development could not be separated from their sense of safety, belonging, confidence, connection, and access to appropriate behavioral and emotional support.

Parent, Family, and Community Engagement recognized families as essential partners in children's learning and development and extended the model beyond the classroom through partnerships, resources, and relationships that strengthened the broader community surrounding each child.

The model was intended to be site-infused. It was not conceived as an external program delivered temporarily to a limited group of students or placed alongside a school's existing operations. Its purpose was to become embedded within the systems, practices, relationships, and routines of the school so that the environment surrounding each child became more coherent, responsive, personalized, and supportive.

Mission

> *We create and support the conditions necessary to enable healthy school environments to take root and thrive in low-income, under-resourced Los Angeles Catholic schools. We do this in our role as an architect of impactful partnerships - developing, bundling, and managing multi-school initiatives, expert partnerships, and multi-funder support. We focus on four foundational pillars that determine the vitality of schools: Leadership and Operational Vitality, Academic Excellence, Social-Emotional Supports, and Parent, Family, and Community Engagement.*

Organizational Goal

> *To create the conditions necessary for sustainable Catholic schools to take root, grow continuously, and thrive through a comprehensive Whole Child, Whole School, Whole Community approach.*

Strategy

Through its SIMPLE™ Approach, CSC brought resources, curriculum, programs, technology, expert partnerships, and professional learning into schools so educators could provide targeted academic and social-emotional support while creating multiple opportunities for students to develop agency, confidence, relationships, and pro-social skills.

Drawing on school-improvement research, its experience managing multi-school programs, and the collective expertise of its staff, partners, and consultants, CSC developed an approach to strengthening under-resourced urban Catholic TK–8 schools as communities of rigorous learning, Whole Child care, and social support.

The strategy was designed to meet schools where they were while helping them strengthen their cultures, practices, systems, and capacity for long-term vitality. School agency and buy-in were central. CSC could bring expertise, resources, partnerships, funding, and implementation support, but sustainable change required school leaders and educators to participate actively, build their own capacity, and incorporate the work into the culture and daily practices of the school.

Through the SIMPLE™ Approach, CSC sought to:

1. Strengthen school culture, distributed leadership, adult collaboration, and instructional practice.

2. Establish coherent, rigorous, and evidence-based academic programs across grades PK-8.

3. Increase student ownership, engagement, and success through personalized, data-driven technology and instructional practices that foster inquiry, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity.

4. Enhance safe, stable, and supportive learning environments through coordinated social-emotional and behavioral supports.

5. Activate parent, family, and community engagement in the learning, development, and growth of students.

6. Build the leadership, operational, technological, and financial capacity required to sustain school improvement.

CSC intended these supports to become visible throughout the life of each school: in its philosophy and beliefs, leadership practices, organizational systems, financial decisions, relationships with families and community partners, classroom instruction, teacher-student relationships, curriculum, and use of data and technology.

Chapter 3: The Evolution

CSC's first year under dedicated executive leadership centered on listening and learning, evaluating the early Consortium initiatives, engaging school leaders and other stakeholders, assembling the team needed to carry the work forward, and translating the SIMPLE™ framework and Four-Pillar Whole Child Model into an actionable organizational strategy.

As part of this process, CSC facilitated two in-person introductory meetings with representatives from 34 schools to present and discuss the vision for an integrated Whole Child approach. These sessions created an opportunity to understand the realities facing school communities and begin determining how the model could be implemented across schools with different needs, strengths, capacities, and starting conditions.

In 2017, thirteen schools joined CSC's Whole Child model. Early implementation revealed that bringing the integrated vision to life required a stronger and more coherent academic foundation than many schools had in place. Schools needed aligned academic programming across grades PK-8; consistent curriculum and instructional practices; reliable assessment systems; meaningful student data; and educators and school leaders with the capacity to use those resources effectively.

Early implementation expanded access to digital learning. Over time, CSC developed the systems, integration, training, and support required to make technology usable across schools.

This learning did not shift CSC away from its Whole Child vision or turn the organization into an academic intervention. It clarified what was required to implement Academic Excellence within an integrated model. CSC could not understand or support the whole child without ensuring that every student had access to a coherent academic program and without establishing reliable ways to determine whether students were learning and growing.

The integrated, data-driven Whole Child vision remained consistent from the beginning. What evolved through listening, implementation, evidence, and experience was CSC's understanding of the structures, resources, partnerships, technology, and adult capacity required to bring that vision to life.

CSC's organizational identity evolved alongside its work—from a collaborative organization managing individual initiatives, to an integrated, data-driven Whole Child model and, ultimately, a network accountable for measurable results.

2012	2016	2017	2025–26
Catholic Schools Consortium begins as a philanthropic vehicle supporting Los Angeles Catholic schools.	Catholic Schools Collaborative is formalized with dedicated leadership and a clearer organizational identity.	Thirteen schools begin implementing CSC's integrated Whole Child model across the Four Pillars.	Capstone Year emphasizes transfer, sustainability planning, documentation, and responsible closeout.

As the work deepened, CSC strengthened each of the Four Pillars and developed the leadership, operational, academic, social-emotional, family, community, and technological infrastructure necessary to connect them. New components were not introduced as unrelated programs. They were developed intentionally in response to what CSC learned about the conditions schools and students needed to take root, grow continuously, and thrive.

The 2025-26 Capstone Year became the concluding implementation phase of the model. CSC focused on leadership, professional learning, documentation, implementation rubrics, school portfolios, sustainability planning, and an honest assessment of what had become embedded, what had been seeded, and what remained vulnerable or dependent upon external support.

> *CSC built capacity that became embedded in some schools, seeded in others, and visible across the broader school ecosystem it served.*

Part II - The CSC Framework

CSC's SIMPLE™ Approach as the Umbrella Model

CSC's principal initiative was the development and implementation of SIMPLE™—the Site-Infused Model for Personalized Learning Environments—an integrated, data-driven Whole Child, Whole School, Whole Community model.

CSC's SIMPLE™ Approach was not a collection of separate programs or initiatives operating alongside one another. It was one coordinated school-improvement model, implemented through interconnected strands of work organized around the Four Pillars. Technology, data, professional learning, partnerships, operational support, and philanthropic investment functioned across the pillars as essential infrastructure supporting the model as a whole.

Within SIMPLE™, student agency, collaboration, relationships, and technology were not separate initiatives; they were elements of a connected learning environment. Image by Crisabel Parra.

At the May 14, 2026 Capstone Celebration, CSC presented eight areas of transformation through its Justice Walk panels: Equity - From Gaps to Growth; Access - From Scarcity to Materials; Data Justice - From Guessing to Knowing; Teacher Practice - From Inconsistency to Fidelity; Student Agency - From Following to Leading; Culture Shift - From Fragmentation to Coherence; System Change - From Patchwork to Priority; and System Shift - From Survival to a Whole Child Focus.

Leadership Development

CSC invested in the adults responsible for leading and sustaining school improvement. This work included principal coaching, instructional-leader development, teacher coaching, professional learning communities, data meetings, classroom and school walkthroughs, observation and feedback, collaborative planning, leadership retreats, implementation measures, and train-the-trainer structures.

Rather than relying indefinitely on outside experts, CSC worked to develop school-level leaders who could manage school systems, guide instruction, support teachers, interpret data, monitor implementation, and assume increasing ownership of academic and Whole Child systems. CSC increasingly treated principal leadership and instructional leadership as complementary functions: the school needed both the leader responsible for the institution as a whole and a leader with protected capacity to hold the instructional core.

> Major accomplishment. CSC established and strengthened instructional-leadership structures, increased adult collaboration, and created clearer expectations for implementation and accountability. By the 2025-26 Capstone Year, 92 percent of teachers assessed through CSC fidelity measures were implementing targeted practices at or above the expected level. The work strengthened teacher collaboration, instructional consistency, and fidelity and contributed to Growth in Capacity.

Curriculum and Instruction

Within Academic Excellence, CSC developed a coordinated PK-8 academic approach encompassing evidence-based curriculum, instructional materials, intervention and adaptive-learning programs, pacing, instructional expectations, professional learning, fidelity monitoring, aligned technology, and targeted support.

The goal was not simply to purchase curriculum. It was to create a coherent instructional pathway from one grade to the next so students did not experience disconnected programs, inconsistent expectations, or significant changes in instructional quality as they advanced through school.

> **Major accomplishment.** Participating schools moved toward greater PK-8 academic coherence, stronger access to evidence-based curriculum and instructional materials, and clearer expectations for implementation. This work advanced Access - From Scarcity to Materials - and supported Equity - From Gaps to Growth.

Assessment Systems (STAR, Lexile, Quantile, NCE, Progress Monitoring)

CSC introduced and managed multiple measures of student learning, including STAR Reading and Mathematics, Lexile and Quantile measures, oral-reading fluency, proficiency data, Normal Curve Equivalent scores, and fall-to-

spring growth. The organization established assessment-participation expectations, common definitions, dashboards, progress-monitoring practices, and regular data-review cycles.

The purpose of data was not simply to produce reports for boards or funders. Principals, instructional leaders, teachers, students, and families needed appropriate ways to understand progress, identify needs, adjust practice, and take greater ownership of learning.

ACADEMIC LEADER VOICE

> We use data to make sure no child is left unseen.

Malik White
Academic Officer, St. Lawrence Brindisi

> **Major accomplishment.** Schools moved from having fragmented or inconsistently used data toward more reliable assessment systems and more informed decision-making. This work advanced Data Justice - From Guessing to Knowing - by making student learning visible and actionable.

Technology Ecosystem (Canvas, Clever, GradeLink, McGraw Hill, STAR Renaissance, Identity Management)

Technology was a cross-cutting component of SIMPLE™, supporting all four pillars rather than operating as a separate initiative. CSC intentionally developed a technology ecosystem connecting curriculum, assessment, student information, instructional resources, learning platforms, identity management, communications, data access, professional learning, and school operations.

The ecosystem included Canvas, Clever, GradeLink, STAR Renaissance, McGraw Hill platforms, and related systems. CSC's role extended beyond purchasing products. It included platform selection, implementation, integration, account and identity management, staff training, vendor coordination, troubleshooting, data access, and ongoing support.

Technology Serves Learning

CSC's experience supports beginning with the question, "How do students learn this best?" rather than with the assumption that more technology is inherently more innovative. Purposeful use can improve access, feedback, personalization, research, creation, and communication; strong instructional design also protects time for print, discussion, hands-on learning, movement, prayer, service, and reflection. This is discussed further in the section on "Future-Ready by Design" in Beyond CSC.

CSC’s experience also showed that security, privacy, and the responsible use of emerging tools—including artificial intelligence—must be considered from the outset. These safeguards should be built into governance, vendor selection, identity and access management, staff training, acceptable-use expectations, and incident response, with equity, transparency, and human oversight throughout.

> **Major accomplishment.** CSC built technology infrastructure that supported academic coherence, access to curriculum and assessments, reliable data, professional learning, communications, and increasingly effective school operations. Technology strengthened Access - From Scarcity to Materials - and Data Justice - From Guessing to Knowing.

Student Support Services

Within Social-Emotional Supports, CSC coordinated social-emotional learning, schoolwide behavior systems, behavioral consultation, climate surveys, student-support partnerships, regulation and calming practices, arts and enrichment opportunities, and access to specialized supports.

CSC's role was not to turn schools into clinical providers or treat support as isolated services. Through the LMU Helen B. Landgarten Art Therapy Clinic, Butterfly Behavior, Everybody Dance LA!, and other providers, schools built a coordinated continuum of universal practices, targeted consultation, behavioral expertise, art therapy, movement, enrichment, and specialized care.

The work sought to create environments in which students were safe, known, supported, and able to learn. Climate and wellness data helped educators and leaders understand students' experiences of safety, belonging, relationships, behavior, and school culture.

The most sustainable work strengthened adults and systems as well as services. Teachers and leaders received consultation, professional learning, classroom modeling, and tools for recognizing needs, communicating with families, and creating calmer environments. Climate and wellness data helped schools move beyond crisis response and embed timely, relational support in daily practice.

Mother of Sorrows 4th grade dance performance at CSC Capstone Celebration, May 14th 2026, image by Judith Kaleikini

At CSC's May 14, 2026 Capstone Celebration, the Calming Corner made social-emotional supports tangible through tools for emotional awareness, grounding, breathing, self-regulation, reflection, and belonging.

> **Major accomplishment.** CSC helped schools establish more consistent Whole Child and behavior-support systems, expanded access to social-emotional and enrichment resources, and made climate and belonging visible as measurable dimensions of school improvement. This led to a shift in culture moving from fragmentation to coherence while increasing growth in belonging.

Professional Learning

Professional learning was embedded across the model and connected to actual implementation needs. CSC coordinated coaching, workshops, professional learning communities, leadership retreats, data meetings, school site and classroom walkthroughs, observation and feedback, curriculum training, assessment training, technology training, and train-the-trainer structures.

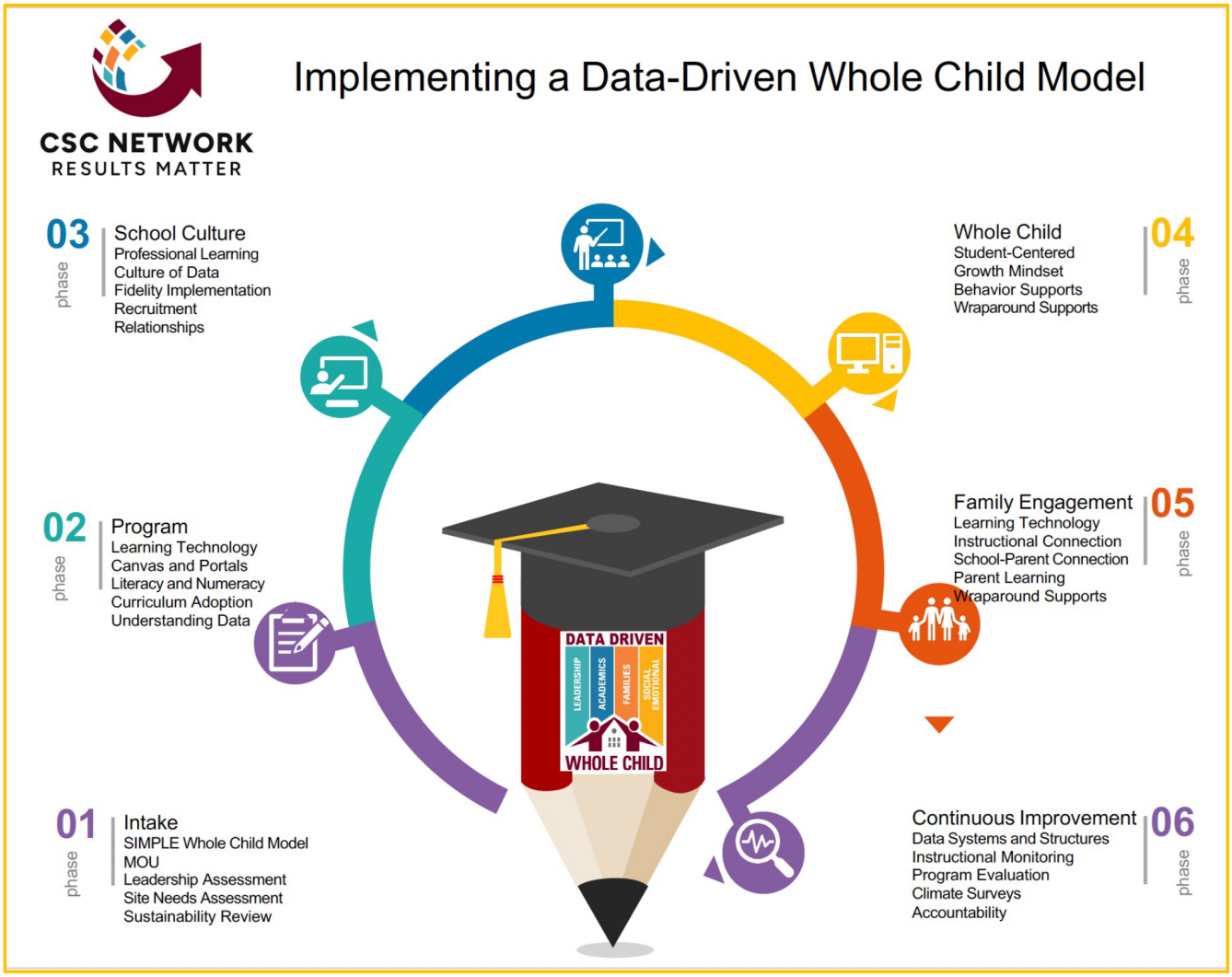
The strongest professional learning was not a one-time event. It was connected to curriculum, data, classroom practice, leadership routines, and follow-up support. Its purpose was to move knowledge and responsibility closer to the school site over time.

> **Major accomplishment.** CSC strengthened teacher practice, adult collaboration, leadership capacity, and fidelity of implementation. Professional learning became a mechanism for connecting the Four Pillars rather than a series of disconnected workshops.

School Improvement Cycles

CSC's emerging improvement cycle can be described as: assess conditions and readiness; establish reliable baseline data; align curriculum, assessment, and instruction; build principal and instructional-leader capacity; coach educators and observe implementation; conduct data meetings and adjust support; engage students and families; measure fidelity, progress, and capacity; and transfer increasing ownership to the school.

The cycle was responsive to differences in school readiness and capacity. CSC sought to meet schools where they were without leaving them there. The level and type of support could change as evidence, leadership conditions, and implementation needs changed.



CSC's six-phase process for implementing and continuously improving the data-driven Whole Child model at school sites.

Major accomplishment. The model created a disciplined process for connecting diagnosis, implementation, evidence, adjustment, and capacity-building. It replaced a program-delivery mindset with a continuous school-improvement approach.

Partnership Architecture and Management

CSC served as an architect of impactful partnerships. The organization identified common needs across schools; developed and bundled multi-school initiatives; selected and managed expert partners, consultants, universities, vendors, and community organizations; secured multi-funder support; monitored implementation; and reported results.

This work required clarity about roles, expectations, accountability, data access, implementation quality, vendor performance, and the relationship between CSC's support and each school's ownership of the work. The presence of multiple partners did not automatically create coherence; designing, coordinating, and managing those relationships was itself a core CSC function.

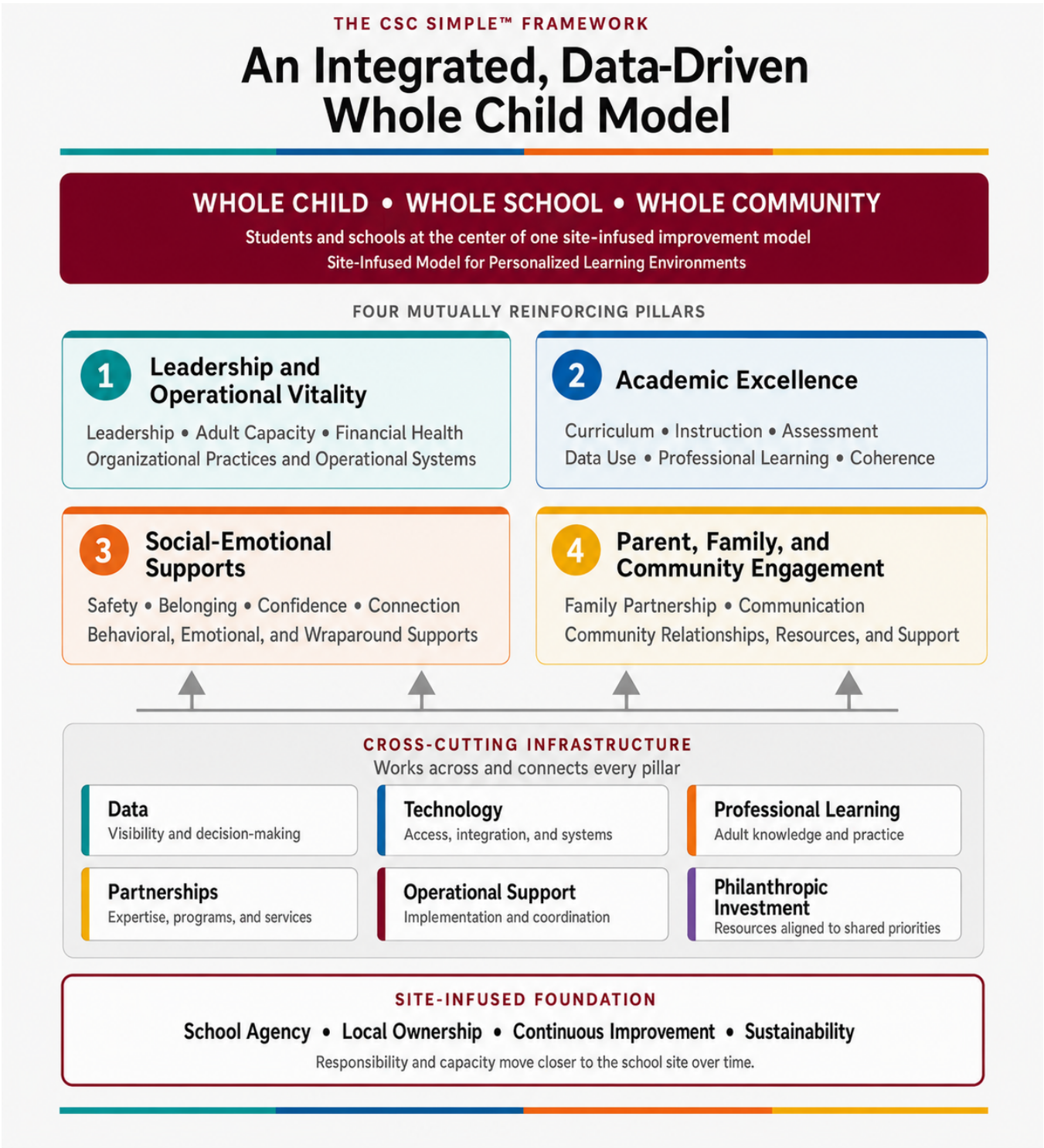
CSC negotiated purchasing agreements and pricing on behalf of participating schools. When the work began, schools generally purchased individual one-year licenses at standard rates, often paying separately for teacher licenses, instructional materials, and related supports. CSC shifted this approach toward coordinated, longer-term agreements that bundled teacher materials, licenses, and support services into negotiated pricing. Through collective purchasing and sustained vendor relationships, schools were able to access more comprehensive programs at costs that were typically **less than half of what they might otherwise have paid.**

50%+ **TYPICAL SAVINGS**	**Collective purchasing changed the economics of implementation.** By negotiating multi-school, longer-term agreements that bundled licenses, materials, and support, CSC helped schools access more comprehensive programs at costs that were typically less than half of what they might otherwise have paid.

The Accomplishment of Integration

CSC's principal accomplishment was not the delivery of a long list of separate programs. It was the intentional integration of programs, systems, partnerships, and resources within one data-driven Whole Child model.

The SIMPLE™ Approach connected leadership, operations, academics, social-emotional supports, students, families, community partners, technology, data, professional learning, and philanthropic investment around a shared purpose. CSC's experience demonstrated that meaningful school improvement requires an architecture that connects the essential conditions surrounding children and schools - and the leadership, evidence, resources, relationships, and local ownership necessary to sustain them.


THE CSC SIMPLE™ FRAMEWORK
An Integrated, Data-Driven Whole Child Model
WHOLE CHILD • WHOLE SCHOOL • WHOLE COMMUNITY
Students and schools at the center of one site-infused improvement model
Site-Infused Model for Personalized Learning Environments
FOUR MUTUALLY REINFORCING PILLARS
1 Leadership and Operational Vitality
Leadership • Adult Capacity • Financial Health
Organizational Practices and Operational Systems
2 Academic Excellence
Curriculum • Instruction • Assessment
Data Use • Professional Learning • Coherence
3 Social-Emotional Supports
Safety • Belonging • Confidence • Connection
Behavioral, Emotional, and Wraparound Supports
4 Parent, Family, and Community Engagement
Family Partnership • Communication
Community Relationships, Resources, and Support
CROSS-CUTTING INFRASTRUCTURE
Works across and connects every pillar
Data
Visibility and decision-making
Technology
Access, integration, and systems
Professional Learning
Adult knowledge and practice
Partnerships
Expertise, programs, and services
Operational Support
Implementation and coordination
Philanthropic Investment
Resources aligned to shared priorities
SITE-INFUSED FOUNDATION
School Agency • Local Ownership • Continuous Improvement • Sustainability
Responsibility and capacity move closer to the school site over time.

The SIMPLE™ framework connects four pillars through shared infrastructure, site ownership, and continuous improvement.

Major accomplishment. CSC created a coordinated structure through which under-resourced schools could access expertise, programs, curriculum, technology, services, and philanthropic support that many could not have secured or managed independently. This helped move schools and funders from a patchwork of programs and services to aligned delivery based on school priorities.

Part III - Implementation Guide

Implementation Premise

CSC learned that implementation must build capacity, not dependence, and that while a central organization can provide funding, expertise, coaching, technology, coordination, and accountability, it must also develop school leadership, staffing, participation, follow-through, and ownership.

A readiness assessment should determine the appropriate entry point, pace, intensity, and conditions of support. Schools may begin with significant gaps, but successful implementation requires willingness, authority, and shared responsibility to address them.

A VIEW ALONG THE WAY

Who Holds the Work?

Leadership Capacity Is Infrastructure, Not Overhead

A comprehensive Whole Child model requires more than strong programs. Leadership, academic coherence, student support, family engagement, data use, technology, professional learning, and operational capacity are interconnected functions necessary for a strong school. The particular programs, staffing structures, and partnerships may vary according to context, scale, readiness, and available resources. **What should not vary is the expectation that the essential functions necessary for student learning and Whole Child development are actually present.**

This distinction is especially important in under-resourced schools. Scarcity can gradually normalize a reduced operating model: one principal carrying nearly every administrative and instructional responsibility; inadequate instructional leadership; fragmented student supports; insufficient time for teacher development and data use; and family engagement dependent upon individual effort rather than functioning systems. Over time, these compromises can begin to be treated as simply what is realistic.

CSC rejected that premise. **Under-resourcing describes a condition to be addressed; it should not define the standard of education students are entitled to receive.** Students in under-resourced schools should not receive a diminished definition of educational excellence simply because the districts, systems, or networks surrounding their schools have not consistently funded what excellence requires.

One of CSC's clearest implementation lessons was therefore that capacity matters as much as design. Schools can adopt strong curricula, assessments, interventions, technologies, and professional-learning practices, but these investments produce their greatest value when people have the time, expertise, and responsibility to ensure that they work together.

The Principal Cannot Be the Entire Leadership Infrastructure

This became particularly visible in the role of the principal. CSC principals carried extensive responsibilities for staffing, budgets, enrollment, facilities, compliance, families, governance, student concerns, and the daily operation of their schools. At the same time, sustained academic improvement required attention to curriculum, instruction, assessment, data, intervention, teacher development, classroom observation, coaching, and implementation.

CSC leadership-development activities helped principals make this workload visible. Exercises such as *What's On Your Plate?*, *What Must, Can, Should, or Won't You Do?*, and *How Do You Spend Your Time?* asked principals to examine where their time was actually going, distinguish responsibilities that truly required their leadership from work that could be delegated or redistributed, and identify important work being crowded out by urgent operational demands.

In another exercise, principals used a Trello board to map 106 "must-do" responsibilities associated with leading their schools. The significance was not the precise number. Making the responsibilities visible exposed a structural challenge: **school improvement depends not simply upon good leadership, but upon sufficient leadership capacity.**

This sometimes revealed a difficult tension. Stakeholders recognized that principals were carrying extraordinary workloads and agreed that instructional leadership mattered. They understood that meaningful school improvement required observation, coaching, data use, intervention, teacher support, professional learning, and consistent follow-through. Yet in constrained budgets, the additional leadership capacity required to perform that work could still be treated as optional administrative overhead.

That is an unsustainable design choice. A school cannot reasonably be expected to deliver an excellent, data-driven Whole Child education without providing the leadership capacity required to operate and sustain it.

A COMPLETE INVESTMENT

What we wish for every school is a complete investment in its success. Curriculum is strongest when schools also have the people and capacity to ensure that it is implemented well. Assessment becomes valuable when leaders and teachers have the time and expertise to interpret the evidence and act upon it. Professional learning has lasting impact when someone is responsible for reinforcing practice over time. Whole Child supports are most powerful when they are integrated into the everyday life of the school rather than added as separate programs.

A complete investment includes not only programs, materials, and services, but also the leadership and implementation capacity that enables them to work together. It recognizes that principals cannot sustainably carry every dimension of instructional leadership alone and builds a broader structure of responsibility around them.

When we consider what a strong school should do, we also need to consider who will hold the work. When we invest in both the work and the people who sustain it, we create the conditions for coherence, continuity, and lasting improvement.

Two Leadership Functions, One Coherent School

Over time, CSC came to see two leadership functions as especially important. The principal holds the institution as a whole—mission, people, culture, operations, resources, accountability, families, governance, and external relationships. An instructional leader holds sustained responsibility for the instructional core—curriculum, teacher practice, assessment, data use, intervention, professional learning, classroom observation and feedback, and continuous academic improvement.

The two functions must operate as a leadership team rather than as competing centers of authority. They need not carry the same titles or be organized identically in every school. Some capacity may be provided through a district, diocese, network, partnership, or shared-service structure. What matters is that the responsibility, expertise, authority, and protected time actually exist.

This has an important implication for how school improvement is resourced. Investments in curriculum, assessment, technology, intervention, and professional learning should be accompanied by investment in the human capacity required to integrate and sustain them. Funding the tools without sufficient capacity to implement them places too much of the burden for success on extraordinary individual effort.

> ***The model is comprehensive, but it is not extravagant. What CSC made visible were the functions schools already need in order to fulfill their educational promise. The question CSC learned to ask was therefore not simply, "What should a strong school do?" It was also, "Who holds the work?"***

Staffing

- Identify the central leadership, program, coaching, data, technology, administrative, and consulting roles required to implement the model.
- Define school-site responsibilities, including principal leadership, instructional leadership, teacher participation, data routines, and ownership of implementation.
- Distinguish roles that can be internal, shared across schools, contracted, or provided by expert partners.
- Treat instructional leadership as a defined, full-time function with designated authority, expertise, protected time, and accountability—not simply another title added to an already overextended staff member or a responsibility layered onto a full teaching load.
- For an integrated, data-driven Whole Child model at this level of complexity, plan for at least two distinct full-time leadership positions at the school site: a principal and a dedicated instructional leader. Titles may vary, but both functions must be genuinely resourced and able to operate as one leadership team.
- Recognize that external coaches and consultants can develop capacity but cannot indefinitely compensate for vacancies, unstable leadership, inadequate collaboration time, or lack of school-level follow-through.
- Treat compensation, recruitment, and retention as implementation conditions. A school-improvement model cannot be sustained amid chronic turnover and structurally inadequate staffing.

Governance

- Establish decision rights, accountability, reporting relationships, partner roles, school commitments, data access, implementation expectations, and escalation processes.

- Define the responsibilities of the central organization, participating schools, governing boards, funders, partners, vendors, and diocesan or system leadership.
- Clarify boundaries as well as roles: funders support the work but should not direct school-level instructional decisions; partners and vendors provide support while schools retain agency accepting accountability for the commitments required by the model.
- Require a strategy-alignment review before accepting new funding, programs, or partners. Examine what the opportunity will add, duplicate, displace, interrupt, or require—and whether it strengthens the school's established pathway.
- Plan for adapting levels of support to include escalation, remediation, and, when necessary, pause or exit provisions for schools or partners unable to meet core implementation expectations.

Budgeting

- Budget for the full cost of implementation, including curriculum, assessments, technology, coaching, social-emotional supports, family engagement, coordination, data management, substitute coverage, educator stipends, evaluation, vendor management, and administrative infrastructure.
- Treat the leadership team as core implementation infrastructure. Budget for a full-time principal and a dedicated full-time instructional leader rather than categorizing instructional leadership as optional administrative overhead. If a shared-service structure supplies part of the function, the school must still have reliable, protected day-to-day instructional leadership capacity.
- Include educational-materials budgeting, procurement, restricted-fund practices, vendor negotiation, and the relationship between financial decisions and instructional priorities.
- Philanthropy can support launch, access, innovation, and acceleration, but long-term sustainability requires a shared resourcing plan that matches implementation expectations to available funding and capacity. The plan should identify which functions can be owned by the school, which are best provided through shared or centrally supported services, and which may continue to require philanthropic investment.
- School ownership of leadership, routines, instructional practice, and decision-making does not require every cost or function to be absorbed by an individual under-resourced school.

Technology

Technology should be planned as instructional and operational infrastructure, not as a stand-alone purchase. The implementation question is not simply which platforms a school will adopt, but how access, identity, integration, support, privacy, security, training, vendor accountability, and long-term ownership will work together to serve learning. The roadmap should therefore begin with educational and operational requirements and make explicit who will maintain the ecosystem after launch.

- Document the architecture, platform-selection criteria, identity management, integration, rollout, training, support, vendor coordination, security, privacy, and sustainability requirements.
- Connect the technology roadmap to curriculum, assessment, data, professional learning, communications, and school operations.

Communications

- Develop communications for school leaders, educators, families, students, boards, funders, partners, and vendors.
- Include model-launch communications, implementation expectations, data reporting, impact communications, user guidance, change management, and incident communications.
- Ensure that leaders, educators, families, boards, partners, and funders understand why the work is being undertaken, what participation requires, how progress will be measured, and where responsibility resides.

Professional Learning

- Deliver professional learning around implementation needs rather than isolated workshops.
- Include curriculum and assessment training, data fluency, coaching, professional learning communities, walkthroughs, feedback cycles, leadership development, technology training, and train-the-trainer structures.
- Recognize that one-time training does not produce implementation. Connect professional learning to classroom and leadership practice and reinforce it through coaching, observation, feedback, collaborative planning, and repeated opportunities to apply what has been learned.
- Require school leaders to participate sufficiently to understand, reinforce, and hold others accountable for the practices being introduced.

Metrics

- Use multiple measures of program fidelity and student growth: participation, academic growth, grade-level proficiency, Lexile/Quantile performance measures, oral-reading fluency, climate, fidelity, leadership capacity, student agency, family engagement, and school sustainability.
- Use best professional practices in the administration, scoring, and interpretation of all measures such that they are used effectively to drive instruction and are well understood by all users.
- Require consistent assessment participation, accurate rosters, shared definitions, timely data access, transparent reporting, and acknowledgment of missing or incomplete evidence before drawing conclusions.
- Use data to support learning, improvement, and accountability as well as for compliance or reporting to boards and funders.

School Readiness, Conditions, and Non-Negotiables

Successful implementation requires more than need, interest, or access to funding. Before determining the scope and pace of implementation, the implementing organization and participating school should assess the following conditions:

- **Leadership.** A full-time principal who actively owns the work, makes timely decisions, communicates expectations, and addresses barriers; and a dedicated full-time instructional leader with sufficient authority, competence, protected time, and accountability. The two functions operate as a coordinated leadership team.

- **Staffing.** Reasonable staffing stability, qualified educators, protected collaboration and professional-learning time, and a credible strategy for vacancies, turnover, compensation, and retention.
- **Funding.** Realistic multi-year resources for both program delivery and implementation infrastructure, including the leadership capacity the model requires, with clear responsibility for continuing costs and shared or centrally supported functions.
- **Curriculum coherence.** Shared instructional expectations and sufficiently aligned curriculum, materials, pacing, and classroom practice to support meaningful improvement.
- **Assessment of participation and data access.** Consistency of assessment practices across all eligible students, including accurate enrollment and roster information, timely access to results, and agreement on the use of findings.
- **Technology and operational capacity.** Reliable devices, connectivity, platforms, identity management, technical support, privacy and security practices, and vendor accountability.
- **Whole Child systems.** Common expectations and workable social-emotional, behavioral, belonging, and student-support structures that reinforce rather than compete with academic improvement.
- **Accountability.** Written commitments, defined milestones, transparent reporting, implementation reviews, and a defined process for evaluating the achievement of expectations and planning for next steps.
- **School ownership.** Meaningful participation by school leaders and educators, communication with families and governing bodies, integration into school plans and budgets, and an intentional progression toward school-led implementation.

Not every condition must be fully developed before support begins. However, leadership commitment, transparency, participation, accountability, and willingness to build the missing conditions should be non-negotiable.

Three-Year Implementation Roadmap

YEAR 1 **BUILD THE FOUNDATION**	• Assess readiness and starting conditions; establish relationships and commitments. • Inventory existing programs and systems; collect reliable baseline data; identify immediate gaps. • Align priority curriculum, assessment, technology, and leadership structures; communicate the model clearly.
YEAR 2 **DEEPEN IMPLEMENTATION**	• Deepen implementation; strengthen instructional leadership and professional learning. • Integrate academic, social-emotional, family, operational, and technology work. • Monitor fidelity and outcomes; adjust supports; begin transferring routines to school-site leaders.
YEAR 3 **TEST OWNERSHIP & SUSTAINABILITY**	• Test ownership and sustainability; expand train-the-trainer structures; reduce unnecessary external dependence. • Document school-level systems; complete capacity and sustainability assessments. • Clarify continuing support needs and establish an honest transition plan.

The three-year roadmap is an implementation sequence, not a guarantee that capacity will develop on schedule. Movement between stages should depend on demonstrated readiness, implementation quality, and ownership. A responsible Year 3 transition should identify what the school can own, what is best sustained through shared or central support, and what remains vulnerable or dependent on continuing resources.

Part IV - Evidence of Impact

CSC Instructional Model: Narrative and Research Foundation

Note. The following sections describe the academic model CSC developed and implemented. To keep this readers' edition accessible and uncluttered, in-text citations are not included in the narrative. Full citations are provided in the online edition at ResultsMatter.life, and the complete reference list is included at the end of both editions. Selected references particularly relevant to the academic model are also included in this section. Statements describing CSC practices, program choices, thresholds, and outcomes reflect evidence from the CSC case study; published research is cited where it informed the design, rationale, or interpretation of the model.

Selecting Programs That Accelerate Learning

CSC approached program adoption with a demanding standard: a program had to be effective, efficient, and socially valid. Effectiveness meant that students learned what the program promised to teach. Efficiency meant that learning occurred at a rate sufficient to make a meaningful difference in students' lives. Social validity meant that the goals were important, the instructional practices were acceptable and feasible for teachers and students, and the outcomes mattered in the real world of school and life (Wolf, 1978; Wolery et al., 1988). Social validity required that the program be likely to succeed with the intended students and in the intended setting.

Evidence of effectiveness was essential. CSC did not adopt programs because they were widely used, attractively designed, or well marketed. Programs needed a credible research base and evidence of significant student growth. For students performing below grade level, ordinary annual growth was not enough: a student who gained one year's learning during one year of instruction would remain one year behind. CSC looked for programs capable of producing **accelerated growth**. Our aspiration was that students could substantially close existing gaps within a year of intensive instruction and, when that was not possible, demonstrate a clear trajectory toward grade-level performance within approximately two years. This one- to two-year expectation was the CSC adoption standard adopted with its school partners rather than a universal benchmark established by the research literature.

PRINCIPAL VOICE

> “CSC reinforced what we believe: access to high-quality materials is not a privilege, but the baseline for learning, dignity, and opportunity.”
>
> **Dr. Karla Arvizu**
> Principal, Mother of Sorrows

This expectation shaped what we looked for inside the instructional design. Drawing particularly on principles of applied behavior analysis and effective instruction, we understood learning as more than initial mastery. Students move from acquisition, when a new skill is first learned, toward fluency, when it can be performed accurately and efficiently; maintenance, when the learning persists over time; and generalization, when students can apply what they have learned in new settings, materials, and problems (Haring et al., 1978; Wolery et al., 1988). A program was therefore insufficient if students could successfully complete its lessons but not use what they had learned elsewhere.

During acquisition, we favored programs that maximized successful responding. Carefully sequenced instruction, modeling, prompting, reinforcement, feedback, and systematic fading of assistance can prevent students from repeatedly practicing errors (Rosenshine, 2012; Skinner, 1968; Wolery et al., 1988). Research on errorless learning and time-delay procedures illustrates an important principle: assistance should be sufficient to establish successful performance and then systematically withdrawn so that control transfers to the naturally occurring task or stimulus (Terrace, 1963; Wolery et al., 1992). The goal is not permanent dependence on prompts but increasingly accurate, fluent, and independent performance.

At the same time, successful learning is not effortless learning. Once students have the knowledge and prerequisite skills necessary to engage with challenging content, they need opportunities to think, make connections, construct meaning, solve unfamiliar problems, and persevere when an answer is not immediately apparent. Research on mathematical proficiency and effective mathematics instruction describes the importance of conceptual understanding, strategic competence, adaptive reasoning, productive disposition, and productive struggle rather than instruction that removes the thinking from mathematics (Hiebert & Grouws, 2007; National Council of Teachers of Mathematics [NCTM], 2014; National Research Council, 2001). CSC sought both carefully scaffolded instruction and genuine cognitive challenge.

This distinction became especially important in schools serving large numbers of students performing below grade level. Remediation could not become a separate curriculum that permanently confined students to below-grade-level work. Effective programs needed to identify and address missing prerequisite skills while preserving students' access to rich, engaging, grade-level ideas and content. Contemporary learning research similarly emphasizes the importance of prior knowledge while showing that deeper learning requires students to organize, connect, retrieve, and flexibly apply knowledge in new situations (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine [NASEM], 2018).

Teacher usability was equally important. Even a theoretically strong program could not improve student outcomes if teachers could not implement it consistently. CSC therefore looked for programs with coherent instructional sequences, excellent teacher materials, embedded assessment and progress monitoring, actionable data, appropriate scaffolds and interventions, and sufficient professional support to help teachers use the program effectively. These features are consistent with research emphasizing systematic sequencing, modeling, guided practice, frequent checks for understanding, feedback, and movement toward independent performance (Rosenshine, 2012). For students, the materials needed to be engaging and appropriately challenging, with frequent opportunities to respond, receive feedback, experience success, and increasingly assume responsibility for their own learning. CSC placed emphasis on weekly monitoring of fidelity in implementation of the adopted programs to ensure that sufficient opportunities for learning were present in every classroom.

Taken together, these principles produced a deliberately balanced approach to adoption. We wanted instruction to be explicit enough to ensure acquisition, systematic enough to build fluency, sustained enough to support maintenance, flexible enough to promote generalization, supportive enough to prevent unnecessary failure, and challenging enough to require students to think. The ultimate test of a program was not whether students could complete it. The test was whether students became more capable, independent learners who could successfully apply what they had learned once the program was no longer available.

Grade-Level Learning and Accelerated Intervention

A central principle of the CSC instructional model was that students who were behind needed more access to effective instruction, not a less demanding curriculum. Students continued to participate in the grade-level core curriculum with their classmates while receiving additional, differentiated instruction designed to identify and close gaps in prerequisite skills. This layered approach is consistent with multi-tiered systems of support in which supplemental or intensive intervention is added to, rather than automatically substituted for, regular classroom instruction (Gersten et al., 2009; Vaughn et al., 2022). The goal was acceleration rather than remediation: helping students acquire the skills they were missing while continuing to learn the knowledge, vocabulary, concepts, and ways of thinking expected at their grade level.

Not all schools used the same programs. CSC instead helped each school construct an instructional system appropriate to its students, teachers, existing resources, and needs. In literacy, core programs included SuperKids, Wonders, StudySync, and SIMPLE Literacy, a revision of the Character-Based Literacy program originally developed at Santa Clara University. In mathematics, Reveal Math provided the primary core curriculum. These programs established the common, grade-level instructional experience provided by the classroom teacher.

CSC then added adaptive technology as a second instructional layer. Programs such as Smarty Ants and Achieve3000 in literacy, and Redbird Mathematics in mathematics, provided students with additional instruction and practice that were more closely matched to their individual levels of performance. Rather than expecting a classroom teacher to simultaneously deliver entirely different curricula to students spanning several years of achievement, technology provided another means of differentiation. Students could work on missing prerequisite skills and practice at an appropriate level while teachers continued to provide rich, grade-level instruction to the class. CSC treated adaptive technology as a delivery mechanism for supplemental differentiation, not as a replacement for teacher-led core instruction.

This approach became increasingly important due to the magnitude of the learning gaps CSC encountered. When work began in many schools, it was common for more than 70 percent of students to be reading below the grade-level Lexile expectations associated with the Common Core State Standards (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers [NGA Center & CCSSO], 2010a). The disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the transition to remote instruction widened those gaps further. CSC responded by intensifying rather than abandoning the existing model. Actively Learn provided additional differentiated literacy instruction, while ALEKS expanded adaptive mathematics instruction.

The post-pandemic literacy data also pointed to a more fundamental problem. Some older students were struggling with grade-level reading not simply because they needed more reading practice or greater exposure to increasingly difficult texts, but because they had never fully acquired the foundational skills necessary to decode unfamiliar words accurately and automatically. Comprehension intervention alone could not repair a decoding problem. Evidence-based guidance for students in grades 4-9 similarly recommends explicit instruction in decoding complex multisyllabic words, purposeful fluency-building activities, and practices that strengthen comprehension and knowledge (Vaughn et al., 2022).

CSC added a more intensive foundational literacy layer. Students beyond the primary grades who were reading below approximately 550 Lexile received Reading Horizons, providing explicit, systematic instruction in phonics, word analysis, decoding, and fluency. The 550L benchmark was significant because it represents the lower end of the text complexity students encounter as they move into third grade and beyond, when reading increasingly becomes the means through which students learn content across the curriculum. Students reading substantially below this level could not simply be given more difficult text and expected to catch up; they needed explicit instruction to strengthen the foundational reading skills necessary to access increasingly complex material. The purpose of the intervention, however, was not to replace grade-level English language arts instruction. **It was to repair the foundation while students continued building the house.** Older struggling readers could develop the decoding and fluency skills they had missed while continuing to engage with grade-level literature, informational texts, vocabulary, discussion, writing, and knowledge. In this way, foundational intervention became a means of increasing students' access to grade-level learning rather than removing them from it.

The same underlying principle guided mathematics. Students participated in grade-level mathematics through the core curriculum while adaptive and intervention programs identified and addressed missing prerequisite knowledge. Evidence-based mathematics intervention combines systematic instruction, mathematical language, representations, word-problem instruction, fluency development, and ongoing assessment rather than simply assigning students easier mathematics (Fuchs et al., 2021; Gersten et al., 2009).

In practice, this created a **layered instructional system**, with each layer addressing a different question about student learning. The **core curriculum** established the destination: *What should students at this grade level be learning?* **Assessment and progress monitoring** identified each student's starting point and barriers: *What can this student currently do, and what is getting in the way?* **Adaptive programs** provided differentiated support: *What additional instruction and practice does this student need to keep moving forward?* And when those supports were not enough, **intensive intervention** addressed a deeper question: *What foundational skills must be rebuilt for this student to become an independent learner?*

Teachers connected these layers. They interpreted the data, provided grade-level instruction, monitored progress, and adjusted support as students' needs changed. Most importantly, intervention **supported access to grade-level learning rather than replacing it**. Students could address gaps in prerequisite skills while continuing to build the increasingly connected and transferable knowledge expected at their grade level—an approach consistent with contemporary learning science (NASEM, 2018).

The model also evolved as evidence accumulated. CSC did not prescribe a fixed collection of products to every school. Programs changed as student needs changed, stronger resources became available, and data revealed where the existing system was insufficient. Schools selected different combinations of core, adaptive, and intervention resources within a common framework. What remained consistent was the expectation that programs work together as an instructional system and that their effectiveness ultimately be judged by student outcomes.

Over the years of CSC implementation, the performance pattern changed substantially. Schools that began with majorities of students performing below grade-level expectations moved toward majorities meeting or exceeding those expectations in reading and mathematics. These results cannot establish that any single program caused the improvement; schools simultaneously strengthened their curriculum, assessment, intervention, professional learning, leadership, and data use. They do, however, provide case-study evidence that the larger strategy was workable: maintain access to grade-level learning, identify precisely what students

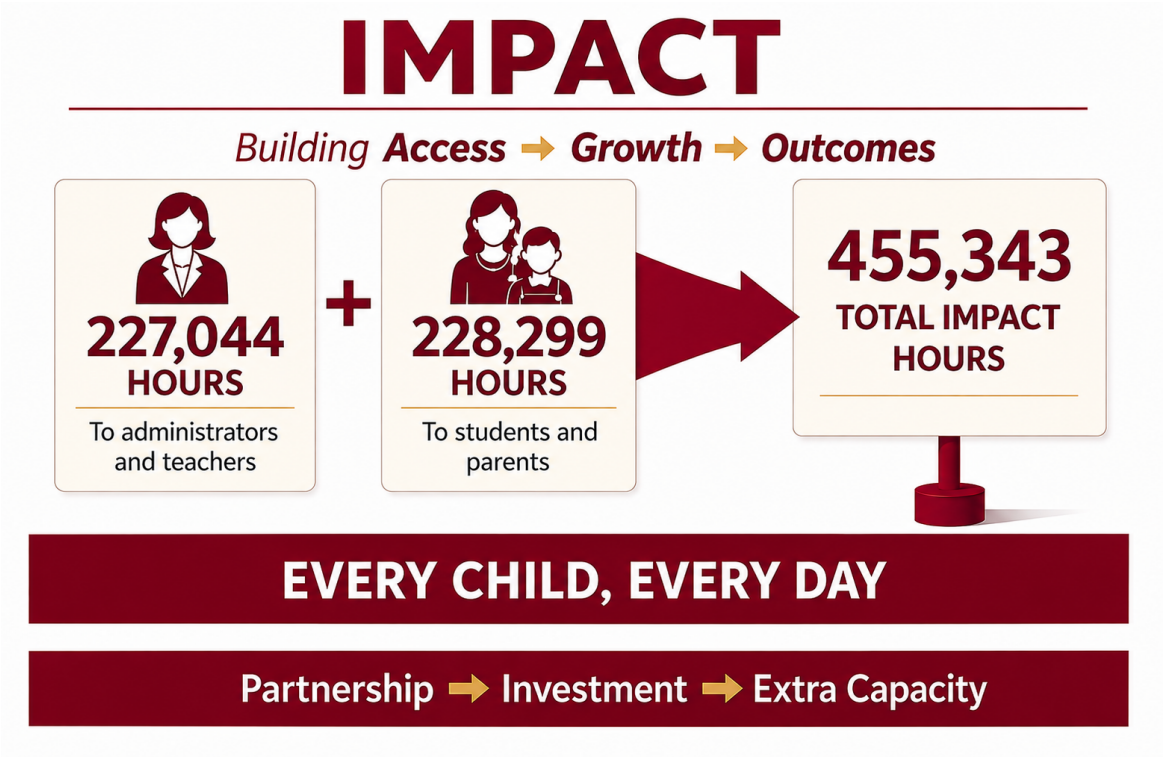
have not yet mastered, provide additional time and targeted instruction to close those gaps, and continually adjust the system in response to evidence of student learning.

The CSC experience ultimately challenged a common assumption about students who are significantly behind. They do not necessarily need to spend years progressing through a separate below-grade-level curriculum before they are permitted to engage with grade-level work. With strong core instruction, targeted adaptive learning, explicit intervention where necessary, sufficient instructional time, and careful monitoring of progress, students can simultaneously catch up and move forward.

The Scale, Growth, and Patterns of Impact of Our Work

Throughout CSC's work, evidence served two purposes: it guided decisions about what schools and students needed next, and it helped determine whether those decisions produced meaningful results. Because the schools participating in CSC changed over time, the evidence that follows is not presented as a single longitudinal study of a fixed group of schools or students. Instead, it documents the scale, growth, and patterns of impact through multiple forms of evidence collected across the CSC years. Together, these measures tell a larger story—of expanding access to effective instruction and support, strengthening the capacity of schools and families, and translating that investment into measurable growth in learning, belonging, and opportunity.

CSC began with a simple premise: schools serving students with significant needs often knew what they wanted to accomplish but lacked the time, specialized expertise, staffing, or resources to do everything alone. Partnership created additional capacity. Across the CSC years, that capacity took many forms—direct work with students and families, professional learning and coaching for teachers, support for school leaders, implementation of new programs and systems, assessment and data analysis, and partnerships that brought additional expertise into schools. Measuring the time invested in this work offers one way to see the scale of that partnership.



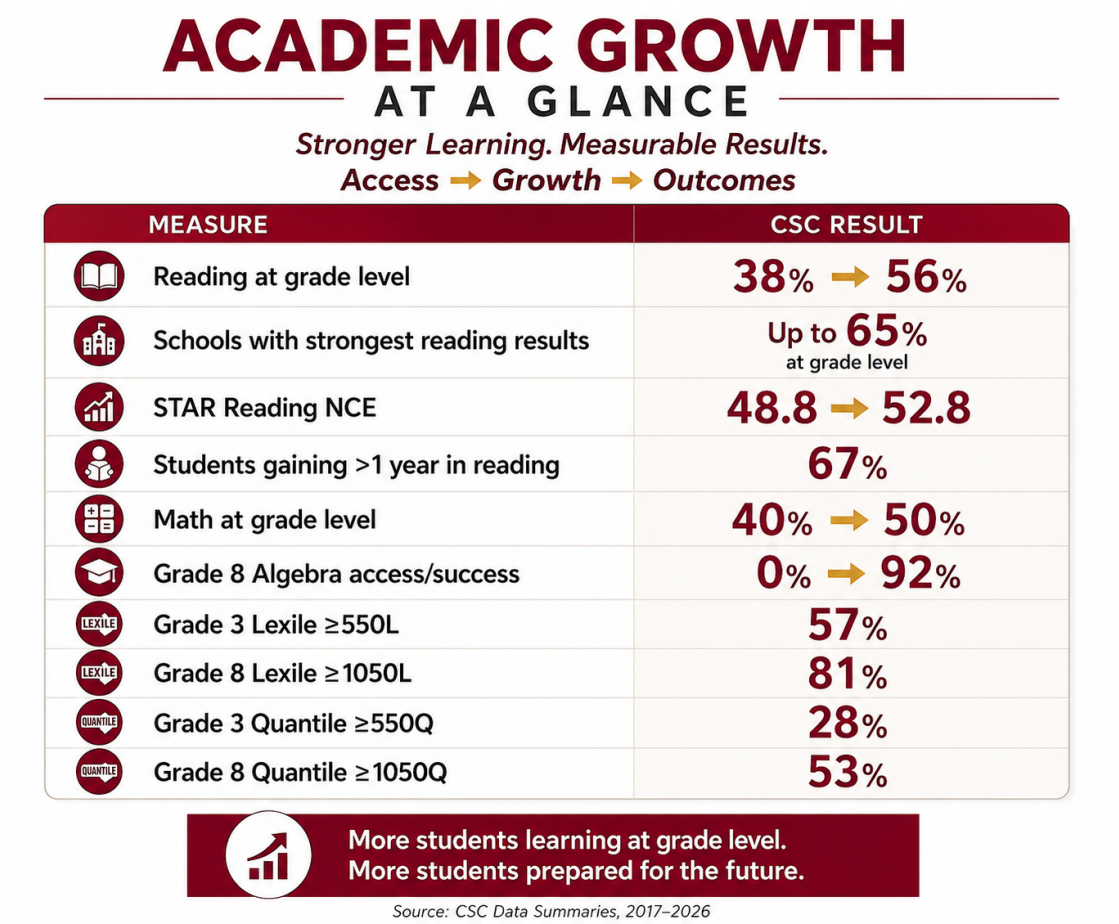
Source: CSC Data Summaries, 2017-2026

Across the span of the Collaborative's work, CSC documented 455,343 hours of impact: 227,044 hours supporting administrators and teachers and 228,299 hours directly benefiting students and parents. The nearly equal investment on both sides is significant. CSC was not simply providing services to students; it was

simultaneously strengthening the adults and systems responsible for their success. Partnership became additional capacity—capacity that schools could use to improve instruction, respond to student needs, engage families, and build practices that could continue beyond CSC's direct involvement.

The scale of CSC's work mattered only if that investment ultimately improved opportunities and outcomes for students. Across these years, schools used multiple measures to monitor academic progress, including grade-level proficiency, national norms, Lexile and Quantile measures, annual growth, student portfolios, and access to advanced coursework. No single measure tells the whole story. These measures serve different purposes and should not be interpreted as interchangeable; considered together, however, they provide multiple perspectives on student progress and access to grade-level learning. Together they reveal a consistent pattern: more students reached grade-level expectations, students who were behind made substantial progress, and more students gained access to increasingly challenging learning. The measures below provide a concise view of academic growth across the CSC schools.

Taken together, these measures show the central pattern that emerged across the work: as schools strengthened instructional systems and expanded access to targeted support, more students were able to participate successfully in grade-level learning. The gains were visible not only in overall proficiency, but also in individual growth, reading and mathematics readiness, and expanded access to advanced mathematics.



Academic achievement, however, was only one dimension of the change CSC sought to support. Student success depended on the quality of instruction students experienced, the conditions in which they learned, and the capacity of the adults and systems surrounding them. The evidence that follows therefore looks beyond academic outcomes alone. It tells the story of CSC's impact through three interconnected dimensions: **growth in learning, growth in belonging, and growth in capacity**. Together, they show how stronger instructional systems, supportive learning environments, and greater capacity among educators, leaders, students, and families created the conditions for sustained student success.

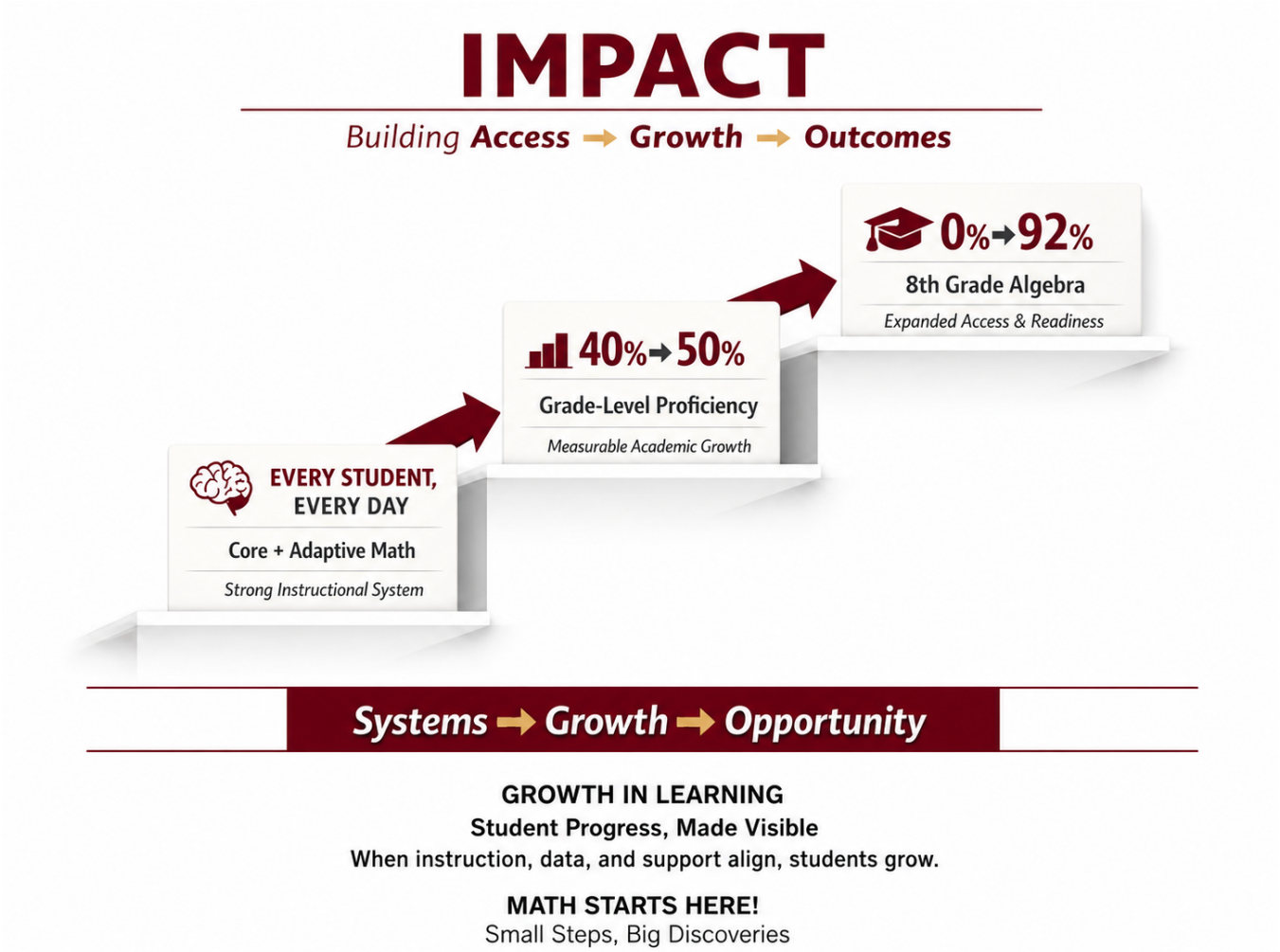
IMPACT
Building Access → Growth → Outcomes
EVERY STUDENT, EVERY DAY
Core + Adaptive Reading Instruction
Grounded in the Science of Reading
38% → 56%
GRADE-LEVEL PROFICIENCY
Some schools reaching 65%
Stronger Readers. Improved Outcomes.
GROWTH IN LEARNING
Practice That Drives Growth
Stronger learning took shape through responsive instruction, multiple measures, and high expectations.
GROWING READERS
Student-Centered Learning Powered by Text

Source: CSC Data Summaries, 2017-2026

The significance of this growth extended beyond reading proficiency itself. As more students developed the skills needed to engage successfully with increasingly complex text, they gained greater access to learning across the curriculum. The results also reinforced a broader lesson from the CSC experience: students who begin behind do not need to remain confined to below-grade-level work. With strong core instruction, targeted adaptive support, explicit intervention when foundational skills are missing, and careful monitoring of progress, students can catch up while continuing to move forward.

The same principle shaped CSC's approach to mathematics. Students continued to encounter grade-level mathematical ideas while adaptive instruction and targeted support addressed gaps in prerequisite knowledge. Over time, the goal expanded beyond bringing more students to grade-level proficiency. CSC also sought to

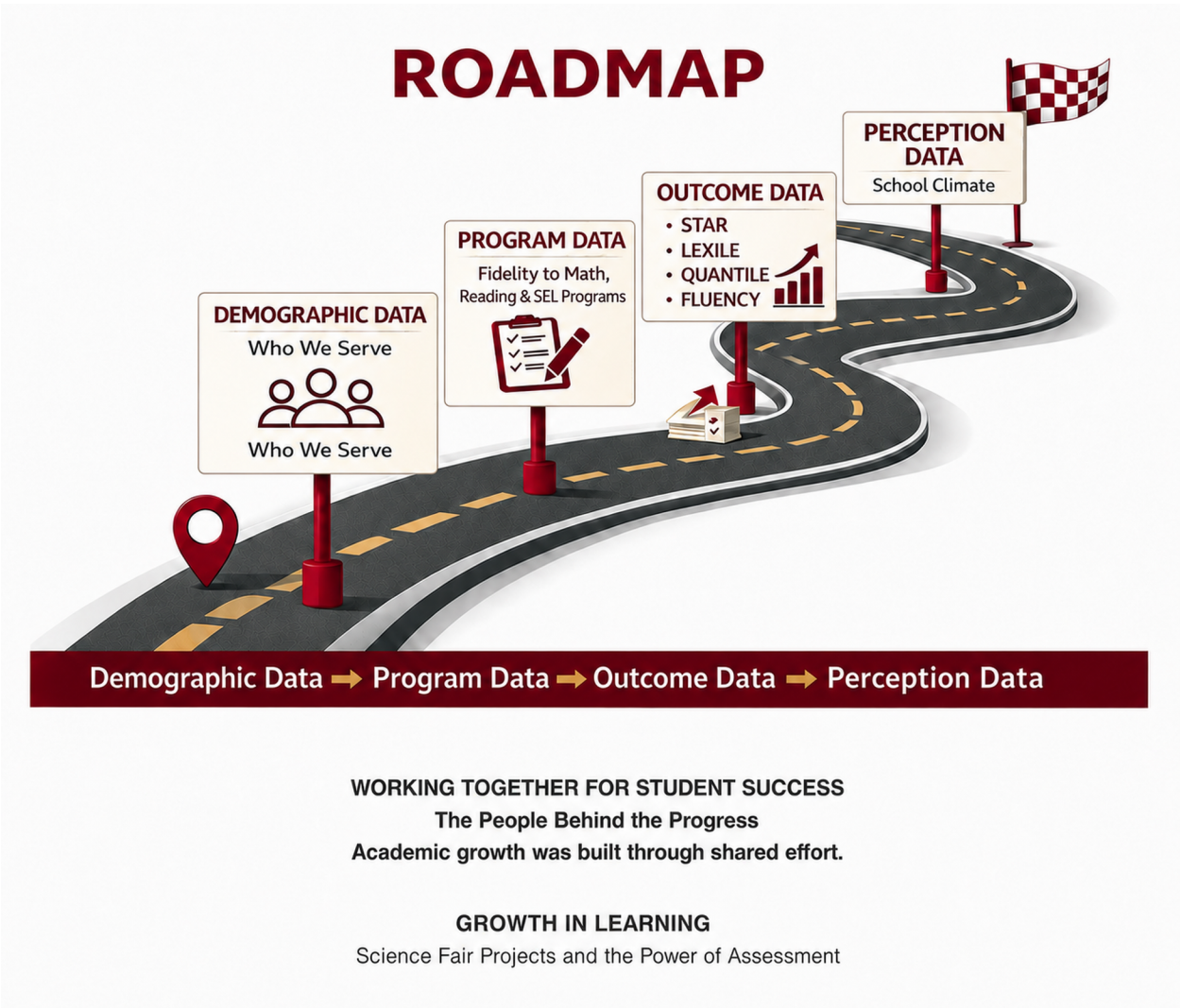
increase access to more advanced mathematics, most visibly by creating a pathway that enabled eighth-grade students to successfully complete Algebra.



Source: CSC Data Summaries, 2017-2026

The mathematics results reinforced the pattern seen in reading: when strong core instruction, targeted support, and high expectations were aligned, students could both catch up and move forward. Increasing grade-level proficiency mattered, but the expansion of eighth-grade Algebra was especially important because it represented something more than improved performance—it represented expanded opportunity.

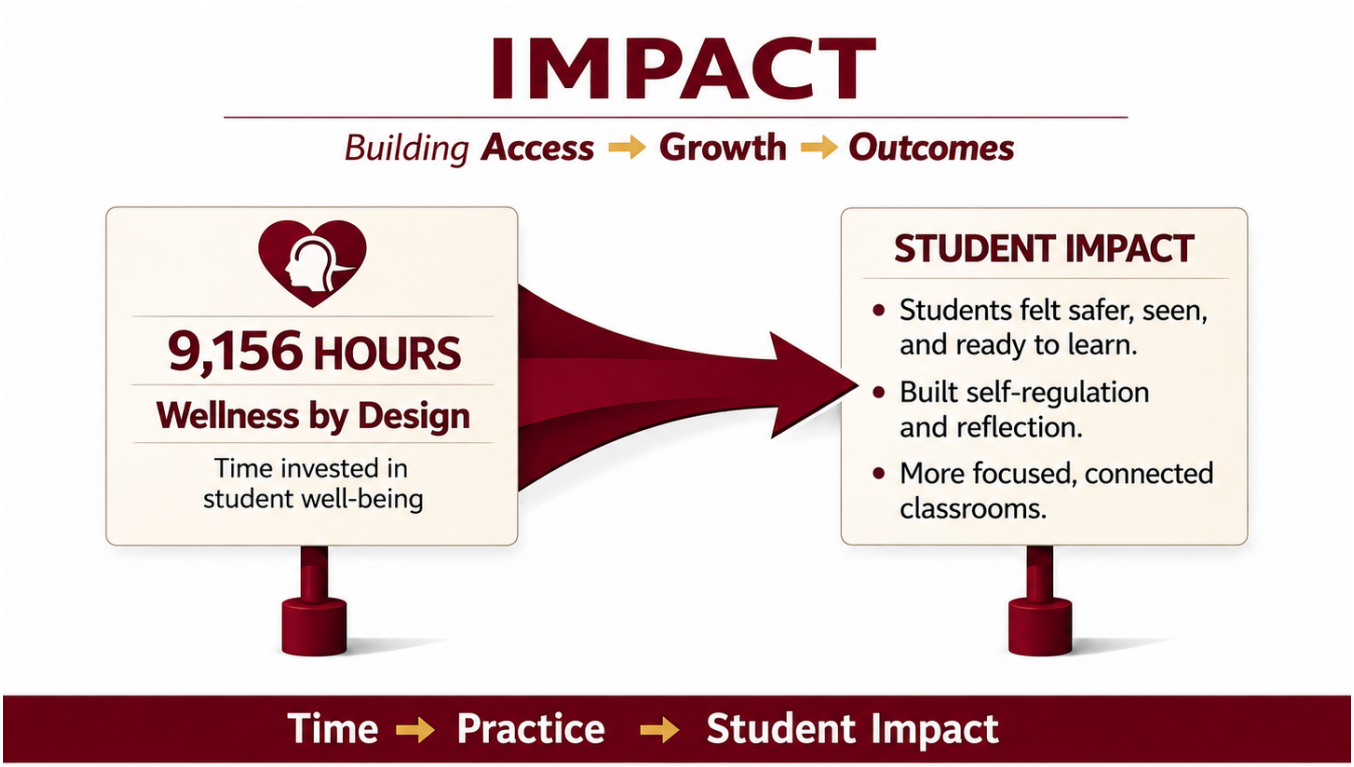
These gains were not the result of a single program or intervention. Behind them was a continuous process of asking what the evidence showed, determining what students and schools needed next, and adjusting instruction and support accordingly. CSC developed a broad approach to evidence that moved from understanding who we served to examining how programs were implemented to measuring student outcomes to finally listening to students, families, and educators about their experiences with the work.



Source: CSC data and assessment framework, 2017–2026.

The roadmap made improvements in an ongoing process rather than an end-of-year judgment. Demographic data identified who needed to be reached; program data helped determine whether students were receiving the intended opportunities and supports; outcome data showed whether learning was improving; and perception data added something the numbers alone could not provide: the experience of the people doing the learning and the work. Together, these forms of evidence helped schools decide not simply whether something worked, but for whom it was working, under what conditions, and what needed to happen next.

That final question led naturally beyond academic performance. Students cannot take full advantage of strong instruction if they do not feel safe, connected, supported, and ready to learn. CSC treated the conditions surrounding learning as part of the work itself. Building those conditions—through wellness practices, stronger classroom environments, and additional supports for students—became another essential dimension of the CSC story: **growth in belonging**.


IMPACT
Building Access → Growth → Outcomes
9,156 HOURS
Wellness by Design
Time invested in student well-being
STUDENT IMPACT
• Students felt safer, seen, and ready to learn.
• Built self-regulation and reflection.
• More focused, connected classrooms.
Time → Practice → Student Impact

GROWTH IN BELONGING

Wellness by Design

Whole child supports helped create the conditions for learning, regulation, and connection.

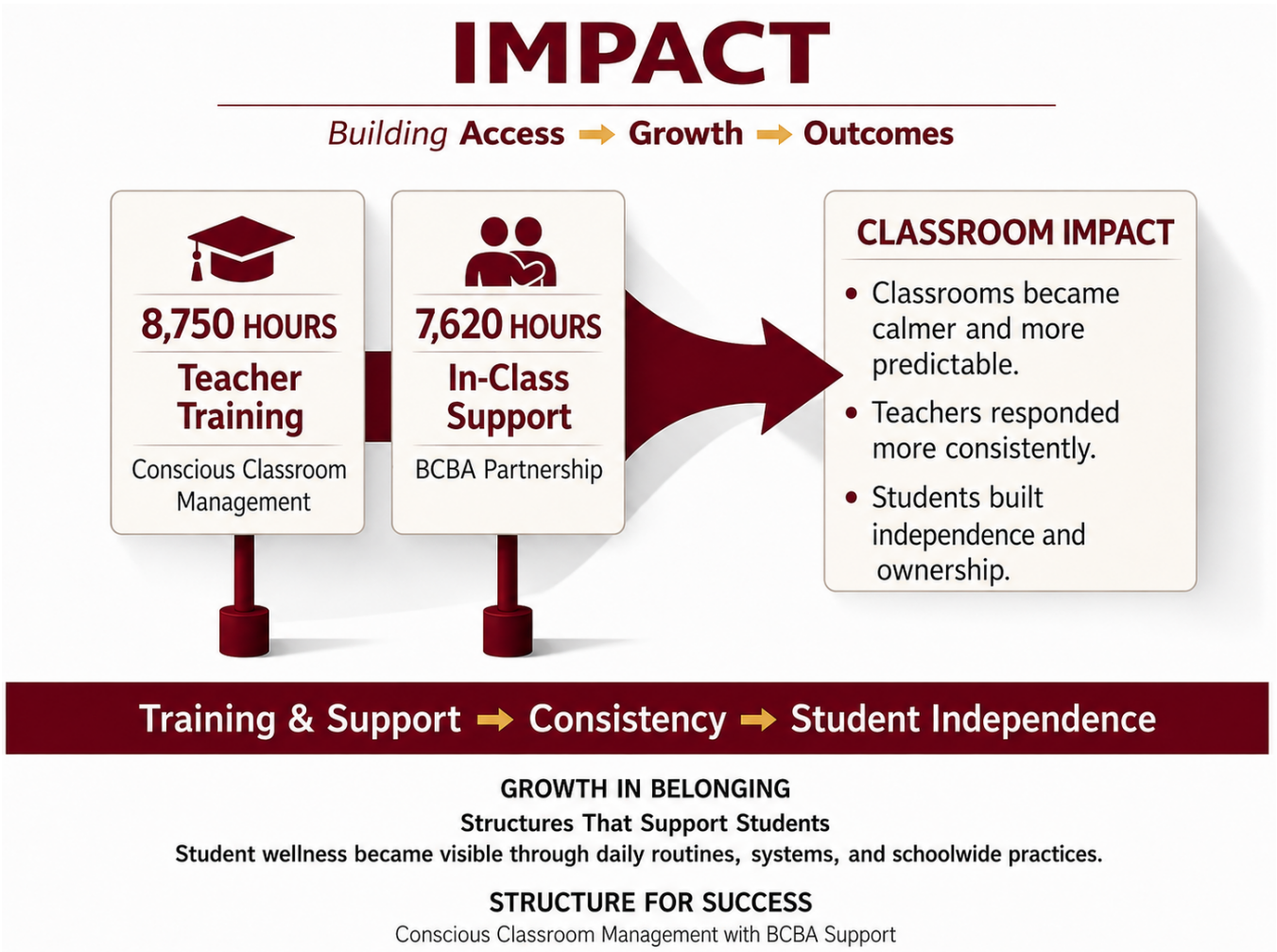
CALM MINDS, KIND HEARTS

Wellness Practices Inspired by *Thrivers*

Source: CSC Data Summaries, 2017-2026

Wellness by Design reflected a growing understanding that readiness to learn is shaped by more than academic skill. Through intentional routines for reflection, self-regulation, connection, and well-being, schools created opportunities for students to develop the internal resources they needed to participate more fully in learning. These practices were not separate from the academic mission; they helped create the conditions in which attention, persistence, relationships, and learning could flourish.

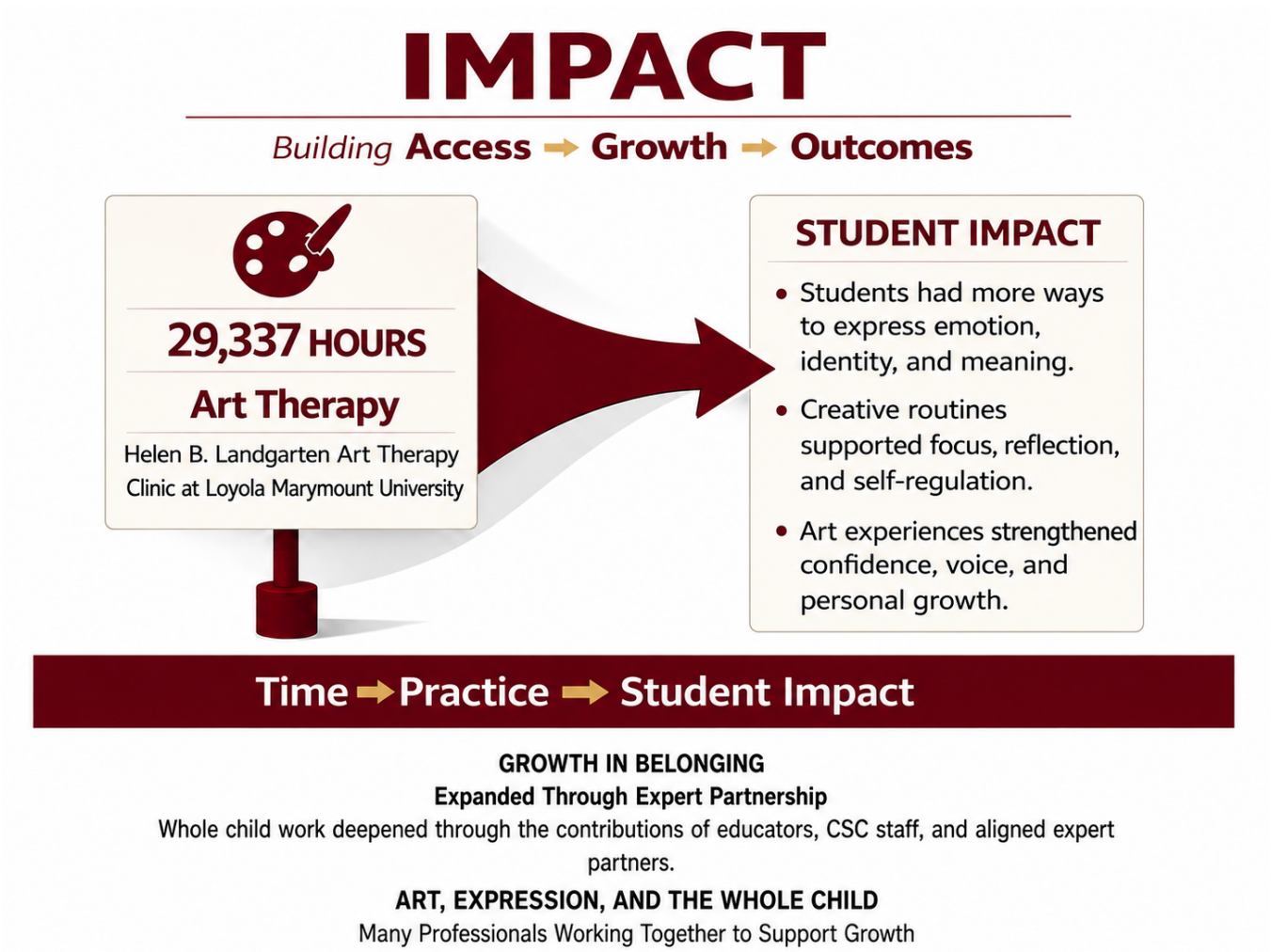
Belonging also depends on what students experience throughout the school day. For these gains to endure, supportive practices had to become part of the classroom itself. They needed to be embedded in routines, expectations, relationships, and the ways adults responded to student behavior. CSC therefore paired professional learning in Conscious Classroom Management with direct BCBA support in classrooms. The goal was to help teachers create calmer, more predictable, and more consistent environments while helping students develop greater independence and ownership.


IMPACT
Building Access → Growth → Outcomes
8,750 HOURS
Teacher Training
Conscious Classroom Management
7,620 HOURS
In-Class Support
BCBA Partnership
CLASSROOM IMPACT
• Classrooms became calmer and more predictable.
• Teachers responded more consistently.
• Students built independence and ownership.
Training & Support → Consistency → Student Independence
GROWTH IN BELONGING
Structures That Support Students
Student wellness became visible through daily routines, systems, and schoolwide practices.
STRUCTURE FOR SUCCESS
Conscious Classroom Management with BCBA Support

Source: CSC Data Summaries, 2017-2026

The combination of teacher development and in-class support helped translate principles into everyday practice. Rather than treating behavior and self-regulation primarily as problems to be corrected, the work emphasized structures, routines, reinforcement, and consistent adult responses that helped students become increasingly successful and independent within the classroom.

CSC also recognized that belonging requires opportunities for students to express experiences that may not emerge through academic work or classroom routines alone. Through partnerships with specialists, schools were able to extend whole-child support beyond what their own staff could provide. One of the most substantial of these partnerships was with the Helen B. Landgarten Art Therapy Clinic at Loyola Marymount University, which brought art-based opportunities for expression, reflection, identity, and personal growth into the CSC schools.


IMPACT
Building Access → Growth → Outcomes
29,337 HOURS
Art Therapy
Helen B. Landgarten Art Therapy Clinic at Loyola Marymount University
STUDENT IMPACT
• Students had more ways to express emotion, identity, and meaning.
• Creative routines supported focus, reflection, and self-regulation.
• Art experiences strengthened confidence, voice, and personal growth.
Time → Practice → Student Impact
GROWTH IN BELONGING
Expanded Through Expert Partnership
Whole child work deepened through the contributions of educators, CSC staff, and aligned expert partners.
ART, EXPRESSION, AND THE WHOLE CHILD
Many Professionals Working Together to Support Growth

Source: CSC Data Summaries, 2017-2026

Together, these efforts broadened the meaning of student support across the CSC schools. Wellness practices helped students develop reflection and self-regulation; stronger classroom systems created greater consistency and independence; and partnerships such as the Helen B. Landgarten Art Therapy Clinic expanded opportunities for expression, identity, and connection. Belonging was not treated as separate from learning, but as one of the conditions that made learning possible.

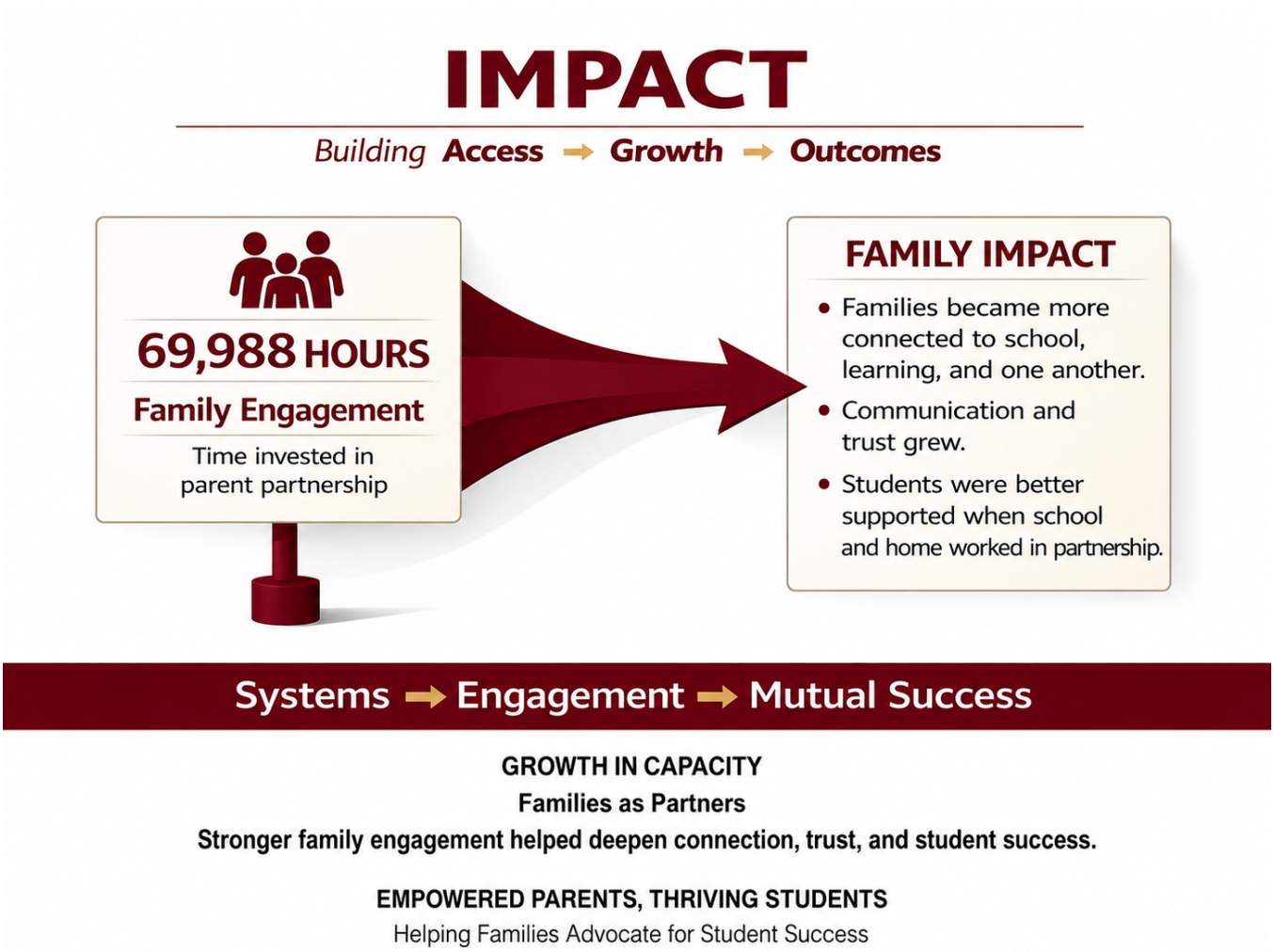
Creating those conditions required more than individual programs. Schools needed adults with knowledge, confidence, systems, and relationships to sustain the work over time. CSC invested not only in students, but also in the people surrounding them, school leaders, teachers, families, and eventually students themselves as increasingly active participants in their own learning. This was the third dimension of the work: **growth in capacity**.

IMPACT
Building Access → Growth → Outcomes
130,800 HOURS
96,244 HOURS
Leadership Initiatives
Time invested supporting school leaders and teachers.
LEADERSHIP IMPACT
School leaders became more confident and data-literate.
Principals were better able to guide instruction, supervise implementation fidelity, quality and lead improvement.
Leadership became a driver of schoolwide growth.
Time → Coaching → Leadership Impact
GROWTH IN CAPACITY
Leadership That Holds the Work
Sustainable change required school leaders to build the capacity to carry the work forward.
SUPPORTING THE LEADERS WHO SUPPORT SCHOOLS
Principal Retreats and Collaborative Support

Source: CSC Data Summaries, 2017-2026

Leadership was essential because lasting improvement depended on each school developing the internal capacity to hold the work together. As principals became more confident in using data to guide instruction, monitor implementation, and lead improvement, they were better positioned to turn individual initiatives into coherent schoolwide systems. CSC's investment in leadership was also an investment in sustainability: the goal was not simply to support schools while CSC was present, but to strengthen their capacity to continue the work themselves.

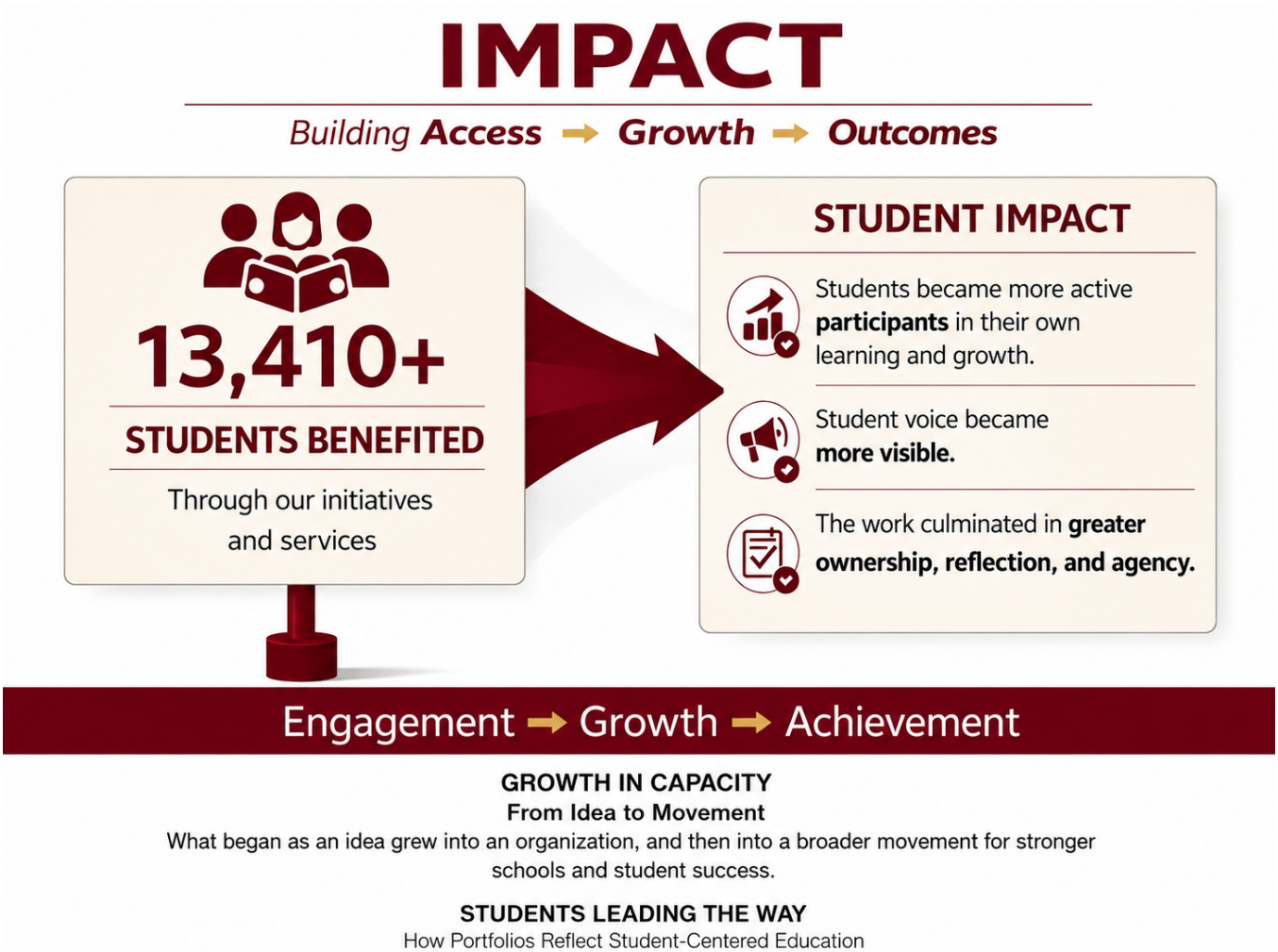
Yet schools could not build that capacity alone. Families are essential partners in student success. CSC increasingly worked to strengthen communication, trust, and meaningful connections between home and school, helping families understand student learning and participate more actively in supporting it. Capacity extended beyond the professionals within the school to the larger community surrounding every student.


IMPACT
Building Access → Growth → Outcomes
69,988 HOURS
Family Engagement
Time invested in parent partnership
FAMILY IMPACT
• Families became more connected to school, learning, and one another.
• Communication and trust grew.
• Students were better supported when school and home worked in partnership.
Systems → Engagement → Mutual Success
GROWTH IN CAPACITY
Families as Partners
Stronger family engagement helped deepen connection, trust, and student success.
EMPOWERED PARENTS, THRIVING STUDENTS
Helping Families Advocate for Student Success

Source: CSC Data Summaries, 2017-2026

Family engagement expanded the school's capacity by bringing another essential partner more fully into the work. Stronger communication and trust helped families understand what students were learning, advocate for their needs, and reinforce the connection between home and school. Capacity was not something CSC simply added to a school; it grew as more people became able to contribute meaningfully to student success.

Ultimately, however, the most important capacity belonged to the students themselves. Throughout the CSC years, the work increasingly emphasized student voice, reflection, goal-setting, and ownership of learning. Students were not simply recipients of programs and services. They were becoming more active participants in understanding their progress, making choices, communicating their needs, and taking greater responsibility for what came next.


IMPACT
Building Access → Growth → Outcomes
13,410+
STUDENTS BENEFITED
Through our initiatives and services
STUDENT IMPACT
Students became more active participants in their own learning and growth.
Student voice became more visible.
The work culminated in greater ownership, reflection, and agency.
Engagement → Growth → Achievement
GROWTH IN CAPACITY
From Idea to Movement
What began as an idea grew into an organization, and then into a broader movement for stronger schools and student success.
STUDENTS LEADING THE WAY
How Portfolios Reflect Student-Centered Education

Source: CSC Data Summaries, 2017-2026

This progression from stronger systems to stronger partnerships to greater student agency captures the larger purpose of CSC's work. Growth in learning, growth in belonging, and growth in capacity were never separate outcomes; each strengthened the others. Students were more able to learn when they experienced strong instruction and supportive environments. Teachers and leaders were more able to sustain improvement when they had the knowledge, tools, data, and partnerships to guide their work. Families became stronger partners, and students themselves became increasingly active participants in their own learning. Taken together, the evidence reflects the central idea that guided CSC from the beginning: lasting improvement occurs when schools build the conditions in which every student, every day, has greater access to learning, belonging, opportunity, and success.

A VIEW ALONG THE WAY

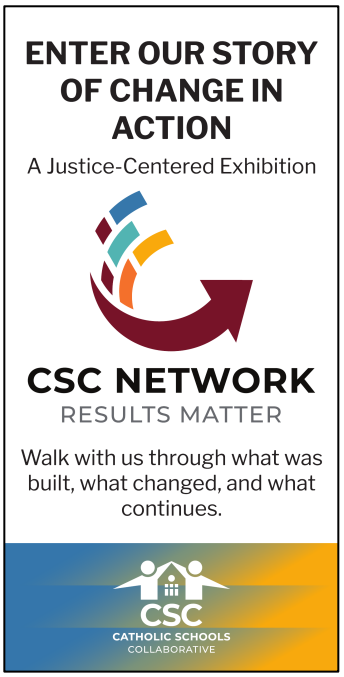
The Justice Walk

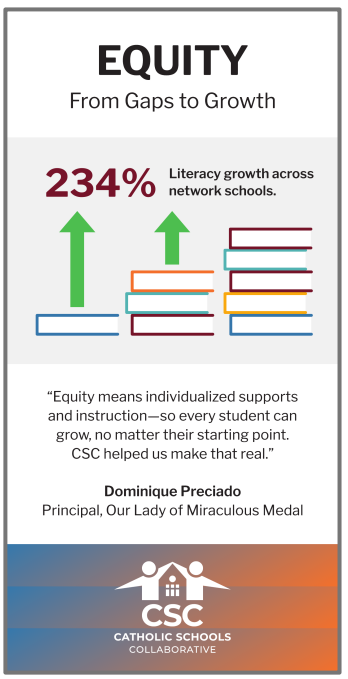
What was built, what changed, and what continues

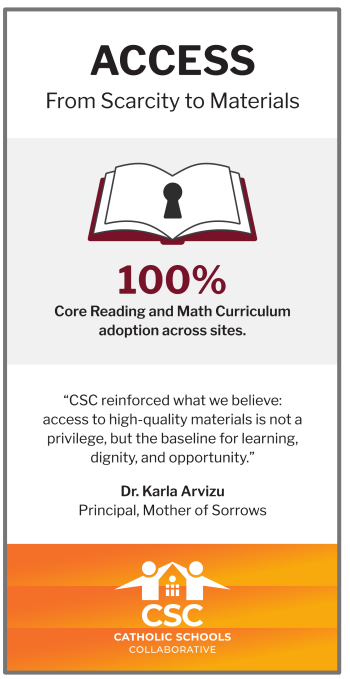
At CSC's Capstone Celebration on May 14, 2026, we invited participants to walk through a visual exhibition we called the **Justice Walk**. It was designed not simply to display what CSC had accomplished, but to return to a more fundamental question: **What was all of this work intended to make possible?** Over nearly a decade, CSC's work included curriculum, assessment, professional learning, technology, student support, family engagement, leadership development, partnerships, and organizational capacity. The Justice Walk asked participants to view those many efforts through a single lens—whether they had helped create more just conditions for students and schools.

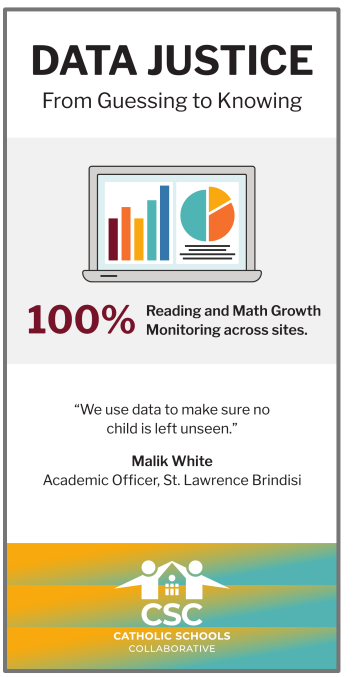
For CSC, justice was not an additional program or a separate strand of the work. It meant changing the conditions that determine what opportunities students actually experience. **Equity** meant responding to differences in students' needs rather than assuming that identical treatment produces equal opportunity. **Access** meant ensuring that schools serving communities with limited resources could offer students strong curriculum and learning tools. **Data justice** meant making student learning visible so that children who needed additional support could not simply disappear within averages or assumptions. **Student agency** meant helping young people understand their own progress and increasingly take ownership of their learning. **Culture shift** meant replacing fragmented individual efforts with shared responsibility. **Teacher practice** meant moving from inconsistent implementation toward common, effective practice. And **system shift** meant recognizing that academic success could not be separated from leadership, wellness, belonging, family partnership, and the other conditions surrounding the whole child.

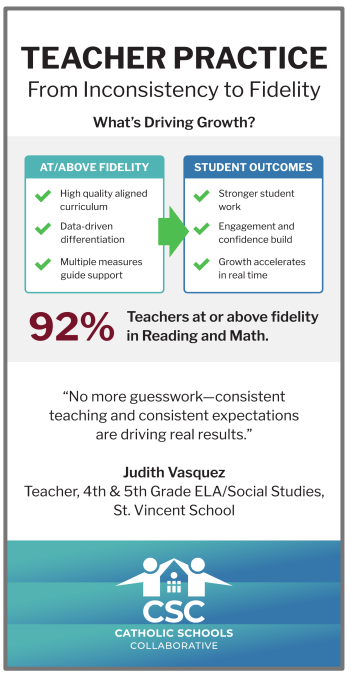
The panels that follow preserve that moment from the Capstone Celebration. They are not intended as another inventory of programs or results; this Blueprint documents those elsewhere. Instead, they offer a way of viewing the work as a whole. The question behind the Justice Walk was ultimately larger than whether a particular initiative succeeded: **Did the conditions surrounding students become more equitable, coherent, supportive, and capable of sustaining their growth?** That was the standard toward which CSC worked—and the challenge these schools and their communities carry forward.

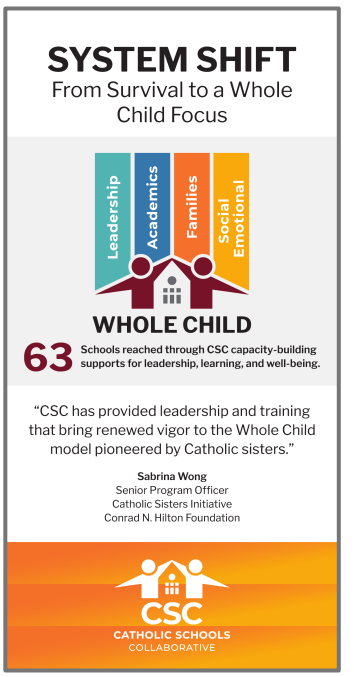



EQUITY
From Gaps to Growth
234% Literacy growth across network schools.
"Equity means individualized supports and instruction—so every student can grow, no matter their starting point. CSC helped us make that real."
Dominique Preciado
Principal, Our Lady of Miraculous Medal
CSC
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS
COLLABORATIVE


ACCESS
From Scarcity to Materials
100%
Core Reading and Math Curriculum adoption across sites.
"CSC reinforced what we believe: access to high-quality materials is not a privilege, but the baseline for learning, dignity, and opportunity."
Dr. Karla Arvizu
Principal, Mother of Sorrows
CSC
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS
COLLABORATIVE


DATA JUSTICE
From Guessing to Knowing
100% Reading and Math Growth Monitoring across sites.
"We use data to make sure no child is left unseen."
Malik White
Academic Officer, St. Lawrence Brindisi
CSC
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS
COLLABORATIVE


TEACHER PRACTICE
From Inconsistency to Fidelity
What's Driving Growth?
AT/ABOVE FIDELITY
High quality aligned curriculum
Data-driven differentiation
Multiple measures guide support
STUDENT OUTCOMES
Stronger student work
Engagement and confidence build
Growth accelerates in real time
92% Teachers at or above fidelity in Reading and Math.
"No more guesswork—consistent teaching and consistent expectations are driving real results."
Judith Vasquez
Teacher, 4th & 5th Grade ELA/Social Studies, St. Vincent School
CSC
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS
COLLABORATIVE



The Justice Walk invited guests at CSC's May 14, 2026 Capstone Celebration to move through what was built, what changed, and what continues.

A VIEW ALONG THE WAY

What Growth Looked Like

Making growth in learning, belonging, and capacity visible

The data presented earlier in this Blueprint documented the results of CSC's work—where students grew, where practices changed, and where schools developed greater capacity to sustain improvement. At the May 14, 2026 Capstone Celebration, we wanted participants to see that story through a second walk through the exhibition, which asked a more immediate question: **What did growth actually look like in the daily life of a school?**

The displays that follow organize that story around three interconnected dimensions that emerged across CSC's work: **Growth in Learning, Growth in Belonging, and Growth in Capacity.** They are not intended to repeat the outcome data presented earlier. Instead, they make visible the practices, experiences, relationships, and routines behind those results. Growth in learning could be seen when students understood their progress, teachers responded to evidence, instructional practices became more coherent, and students gained access to stronger academic pathways. Growth in belonging could be felt in calmer, more predictable classrooms; opportunities for reflection and self-regulation; stronger relationships; creative expression; and students who felt increasingly safe and connected. Growth in capacity became visible when principals led with greater clarity, teachers shared responsibility for results, families became stronger partners, and students increasingly understood and owned their own learning.

What mattered was not any one activity pictured on these panels. The larger change was in how the pieces began to work together. Curriculum, assessment, adaptive learning, classroom practice, wellness, behavior support, family engagement, leadership, and student agency became parts of a more coherent experience, not isolated initiatives. The photographs and examples capture some of the ordinary moments through which that coherence became real: a student looking at progress and knowing what to do next; a teacher adjusting instruction because the evidence called for it; a classroom becoming calmer because expectations were shared; a family understanding how to support learning; a principal using information to lead rather than simply report; a student moving from being the recipient of support to becoming an active participant in his or her own growth.

Seen this way, **learning, belonging, and capacity were not three separate accomplishments**. They reinforced one another. Students learned better when they felt safe, connected, and supported. Teachers and leaders sustained improvement better when they shared common practices, useful evidence, and the confidence to act on it. Families expanded the circle of support around students, while students themselves developed greater voice, agency, and responsibility. The displays preserve what that work looked and felt like near the end of CSC: not simply stronger numbers, but stronger conditions for learning embedded more deeply in the everyday life of schools. That interconnectedness became one of the most important lessons of the CSC experience.

Growth in Learning

Growth in Learning documents how coherent curriculum, assessment, instructional practice, adaptive learning, and shared use of data made student progress more visible and supported stronger academic pathways.

GROWTH IN LEARNING

STUDENT PROGRESS, MADE VISIBLE

When instruction, data, and support align, students grow.

Impact

- The percentage of students at or above grade-level proficiency in math grew from 40% to 50%.
- 92% of 8th graders now take Algebra up from 0% at the starts.
- Every student now receives daily core and adaptive math instruction, helping make math progress more visible over time.

What We Did

- Built a coherent math pathway for daily instruction and personalized growth.
- Implemented daily core instruction plus adaptive learning.
- Created personalized pathways based on student readiness.
- Trained teachers to use real-time data to guide instruction.

Why it Matters

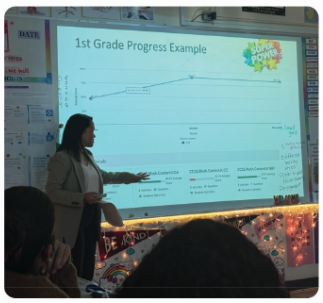
- Visible progress helped build confidence and momentum.
- A stronger math pathway helped students move forward from where they started.
- When instruction and data worked together, teachers could better respond to student readiness and next steps.

GROWTH IN LEARNING

MATH STARTS HERE

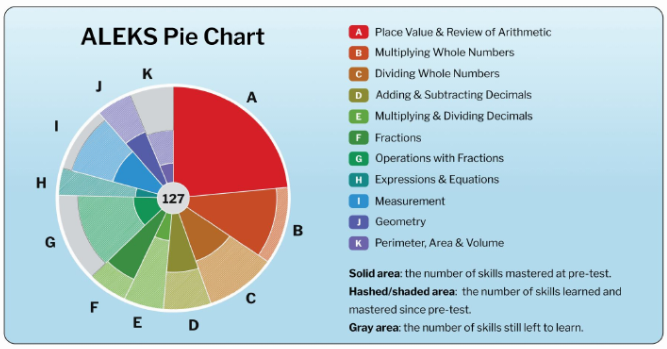
A stronger math pathway.
Visible growth.

Readiness → Progress → Confidence → Growth



Visible math progress helped teachers respond more precisely and support student growth.

Progress became visible through daily instruction and adaptive learning.



Adaptive learning helped personalize next steps for growth.

GROWTH IN LEARNING

PRACTICE THAT DRIVES GROWTH

From fragmented materials to coherent literacy instruction and growth.

Impact

- The percentage of students at or above grade-level proficiency in reading grew from 38% to 56%, with some schools reaching 65%.
- Every student now receives more coherent literacy instruction grounded in the science of reading.
- Students built confidence, comprehension, and engagement through stronger whole-group literacy practice.

What We Did

- Replaced fragmented materials with a coherent literacy pathway rooted in the science of reading.
- Built consistent literacy routines and interventions that strengthened classroom instruction.
- Provided coaching and data-informed support to strengthen instructional practice, intervention, and progress monitoring.

Why it Matters

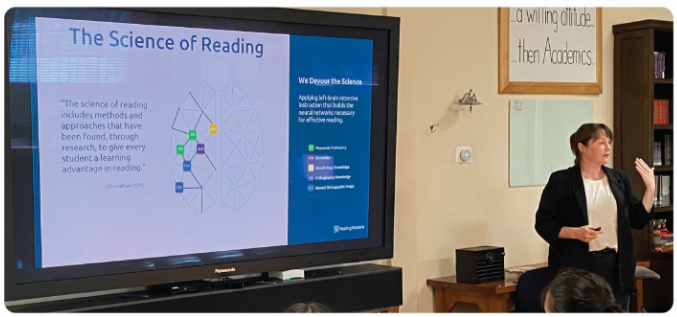
- Students deserve literacy instruction that is explicit, engaging, and grounded in what works.
- More coherent literacy instruction helped students move from reading practice to discussion, deeper comprehension, and written response.
- Reading support became more timely, targeted, and connected across classrooms.

GROWTH IN LEARNING

GROWING READERS

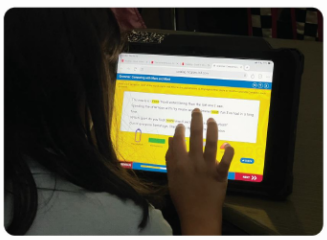
Stronger literacy. Growing readers.

Read → Discuss → Write → Grow

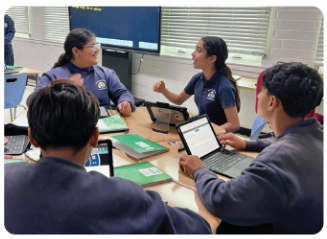

The Science of Reading
"The science of reading includes methods and approaches that have been found, through research, to give every student a learning advantage in reading."
We Devour the Science
a willing attitude...
...then Academics

Teachers engaged in literacy training grounded in the science of reading.

Students built reading skills through structured digital practice, printed text, and engaged learning.



Students used text-based learning to strengthen response, expression, and comprehension.



Students discussed text, shared ideas, and used evidence to deepen understanding.

Students strengthened literacy through writing practice that reinforced understanding.

GROWTH IN LEARNING

SHARED RESPONSIBILITY, STRONGER RESULTS

Academic growth was built through shared practice, shared responsibility, and collective effort.

Impact

- Growth became more visible through multiple measures and authentic student work.
- Student success was better understood and more effectively supported.
- Assessment systems helped teachers and leaders monitor growth over time and make stronger decisions.

What We Did

- Built a shared approach to student growth using multiple measures.
- Strengthened conditions for strong teaching and learning with school leaders.
- Supported responsive instruction with fidelity in daily practice.
- Coached staff toward greater rigor, coherence, and follow-through.

Why it Matters

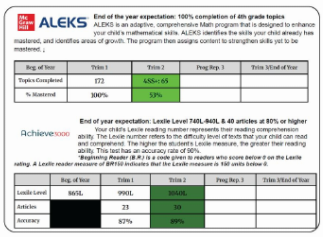
- Multiple measures gave teachers and leaders a fuller picture of student learning.
- Student work made learning more visible.
- Data clarified next steps.
- Shared responsibility strengthened follow-through.

GROWTH IN LEARNING

WORKING TOGETHER FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

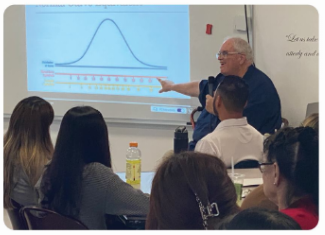
Multiple measures. Better decisions. Stronger support.

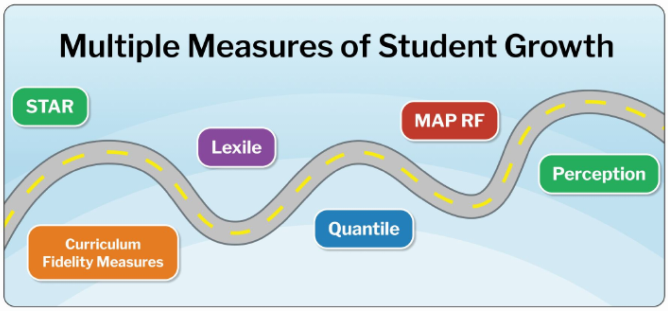
See More → Understand More → Support Better



Multiple measures gave teachers and leaders a fuller picture of student growth across the year.

Training in data and growth metrics helped educators interpret student progress with greater clarity.





A clear assessment framework helped schools monitor progress, understand need, and respond more effectively.

Growth in Belonging

Growth in Belonging documents the conditions that helped students feel safe, regulated, connected, expressive, and able to participate more fully in learning.

GROWTH IN BELONGING

WELLNESS BY DESIGN

Wellness practices supported regulation, readiness, and student success.

Impact

- Students felt safer and more ready to learn.
- Students built stronger self-regulation and reflection.
- Classrooms became more focused and connected.

What We Did

- Equipped educators with research-informed wellness practices grounded in empathy, resilience, and emotional development.
- Introduced calming routines and spaces that helped students pause, reset, and rejoin learning.
- Strengthened classroom conditions where regulation supported readiness and connection.

Why it Matters

- Students need safety, regulation, and connection to fully engage in learning.
- Stronger regulation supports attention, participation, and belonging.
- Whole-child practices strengthen the conditions for learning.

Aligned Expert Partners Across Growth in Belonging

Butterfly Behavior Consulting • LMU Helen B. Landgarten Art Therapy Clinic • Everybody Dance LA! • Dr. Michele Borba • Grace Dearborn, M.A., Conscious Teaching

GROWTH IN BELONGING

SUPPORTING REGULATION AND READINESS

Calmer classrooms. Stronger support.

Pause → Reset → Rejoin Learning

Students practiced calming strategies that supported regulation and readiness.

Thrivers training helped educators build practices that supported calm, connection, and readiness.

Steady adult presence and responsive spaces helped students feel secure, cared for, and ready to learn.

GROWTH IN BELONGING

STRUCTURES THAT SUPPORT STUDENTS

Responsive classrooms. Safer, steadier spaces for students to participate and build ownership.

Impact

- Calmer, more predictable classrooms helped students thrive.
- Teachers strengthened consistent practice with support from behavior specialists.
- Students experienced greater safety, participation, and ownership in the school day.

What We Did

- Embedded whole-child practices into the daily life of classrooms and schools.
- Paired conscious classroom management with behavior specialist support to strengthen consistency and responsiveness.
- Trained teachers to respond to behavior with greater clarity, care, and skill.

Why it Matters

- Students do better when expectations are clear and adults respond consistently.
- Predictable routines and responsive support reduce chaos and increase connection.
- When behavior is understood and taught, students are better able to regulate, engage, and belong.

GROWTH IN BELONGING

CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS

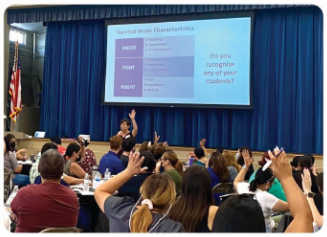
Calmer classrooms. Stronger support. Greater student ownership.

Consistency → Safety → Ownership

Board-Certified Behavior Analysts Support Student Success

Behavior supports helped school communities feel safer and more responsive.

Conscious Classroom Management



Professional learning helped educators build stronger classroom routines and responses.

Respond. Don't React
Stay calm & consistent

Understand Behavior
Assess & Analyze

Teach Behavior
Explicitly Teach and Practice - Behavior Specific Praise

Design Support Plans
Create effective BIPs

Consistency & Safety
Be predictable & fair

Build Consistent Systems
Align & Reinforce

Build Ownership
Foster Responsibility

Increase Independence
Teach self-regulation

Behavior support methods helped schools build safer, more predictable classroom routines.

GROWTH IN BELONGING

ART, EXPRESSION, AND THE WHOLE CHILD

Creative practice supported healing, growth, reflection, and self-understanding.

Impact

- Students had more ways to express emotion, identity, and meaning.
- Creative routines supported focus, reflection, and self-regulation.
- Expressive experiences strengthened confidence and personal growth.

What We Did

- Brought visual art, movement, and reflective practice into learning, healing, and growth.
- Created space for emotional expression, reflection, and meaning-making.
- Supported students in exploring identity, emotion, and self-understanding.

Why it Matters

- Students need opportunities not only to achieve, but to express, reflect, and make meaning of their experience.
- Creative practice supported healing as well as learning.
- Expression helped students feel seen, capable, and connected.

GROWTH IN BELONGING

BELONGING TAKES SHAPE

Creative expression. Stronger connection.

Create → Reflect → Express

Students and families created, connected, and made meaning together.

Performance gave students a joyful pathway to confidence and belonging.

Teaching artists guided movement that supported expression and connection.

Art-making supported reflection and self-understanding.

Students used visual art to express identity and meaning.

Growth in Capacity

Growth in Capacity documents the leadership, family partnership, teacher practice, student ownership, and systems required to sustain improvement closer to the school site.

GROWTH IN CAPACITY

FAMILIES AS PARTNERS

Stronger family partnership.
Stronger student support.

Impact

- Families became more connected to school, learning, and one another.
- Communication and trust grew.
- Students were better supported when school and home worked in partnership.

What We Did

- Created meaningful opportunities for families to engage in school life, student learning, and support around their children through STEM Nights, Data Nights, Maestro en Casa, and Parent Institutes.
- Helped families better understand and support student growth.
- Strengthened the relationship between home and school.

Why it Matters

- Students do better when families feel welcomed, informed, and genuinely connected to the life of the school.
- Partnership strengthens belonging.
- Trust improves follow-through and connection.
- Children are strengthened when the adults around them are more connected, informed, and aligned.

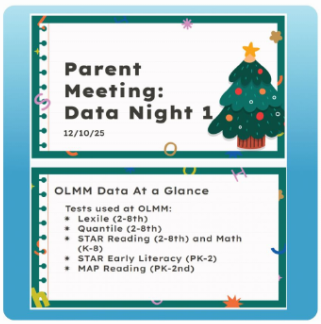
GROWTH IN CAPACITY

CONNECTED FAMILIES, SUPPORTED STUDENTS

Stronger communication, access to information, and shared understanding helped deepen home-school partnership.

Connection → Trust → Partnership

Families became active partners in school life and student support.



Family data meetings provided clearer access to student learning and strengthened home-school partnership.

Stronger communication and connection helped build trust between families and schools.

GROWTH IN CAPACITY

LEADERSHIP THAT HOLDS THE WORK

Stronger leaders. Stronger schools.

Impact

- School leaders became more confident and data-literate.
- Principals were better able to guide instruction and supervise for quality and fidelity.
- Leadership became a driver of schoolwide growth.

What We Did

- Built leaders' capacity to use multiple measures of data to guide instruction and strengthen the conditions for achieving both fidelity and growth in learning.
- Strengthened instructional leadership in support of teachers and classrooms.
- Increased ownership of systems and expectations.

Why it Matters

- Sustainable improvement depends on strong leadership.
- School leaders set direction, support teachers, and hold the work over time.
- Data became a tool for action, not compliance.
- Schools grew stronger when leaders had the capacity to sustain the work over time.

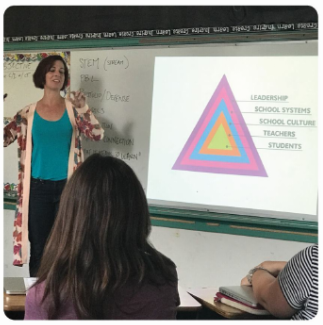
GROWTH IN CAPACITY

LEADING WITH CLARITY

Leadership that aligns people and practice.

Lead with Clarity → Act with Purpose

Leaders built the skills and confidence to guide instruction and school improvement.



Data became a tool for clarity, decision-making, and action.

Clear leadership strengthened alignment, direction, and follow-through across the school community.

GROWTH IN CAPACITY

OWNING THEIR LEARNING

Clear routines, visible progress, and steady support helped students build confidence and agency.

Impact

- Students showed growing ability to reflect on their learning and talk about their progress.
- Student voice and participation became more visible.
- The work strengthened ownership, reflection, and agency.

What We Did

- Coached educators to make learning targets, progress, and next steps visible to students.
- Supported student led conferencing, student portfolios and data conversations.
- Implemented student agency practices through student-led conferences, graduate profiles, portfolios, and student data conversations.

Why it Matters

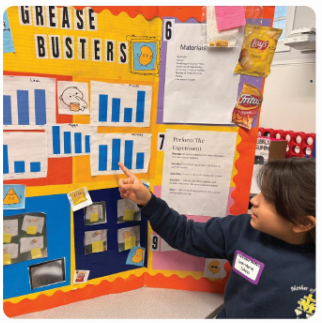
- Students are more likely to persist when they understand their progress.
- Ownership grows when expectations, feedback, and routines are clear.
- Student agency develops when adults create conditions for reflection, responsibility, and success.
- Schools are stronger when students are active participants in learning.

GROWTH IN CAPACITY

CONFIDENCE IN ACTION

Students increasingly understood what they were learning, how they were growing, and what they needed to do next.

Progress → Participation → Ownership



Students were supported to explain their thinking and show what they knew.

Progress was not hidden from students—it was made visible so they could track their own growth.

Students participated actively, contributed ideas, and engaged with confidence.

Built Together

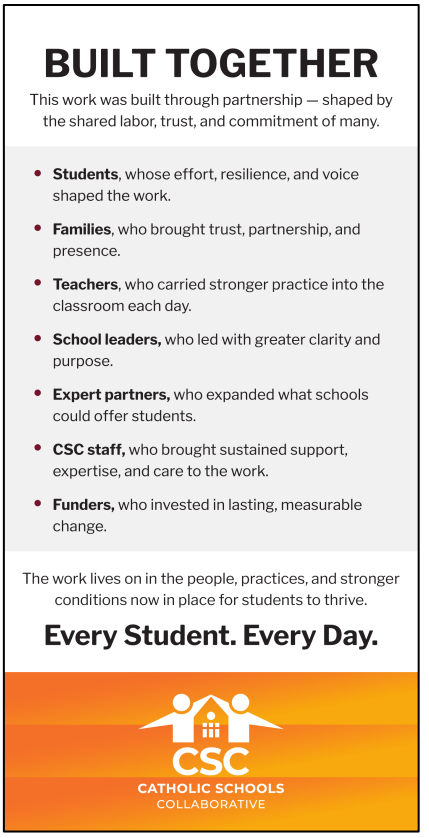
CSC's results were never the product of a single program, partner, leader, or funding stream. They were built through shared labor, aligned responsibility, and the sustained contributions of many people. Students, families, educators, school leaders, expert partners, CSC staff, and funders each played an essential role in shaping the work and carrying it forward.

At CSC's May 14, 2026 Capstone Celebration, that collective architecture was made visible. The evening honored not only what had been accomplished, but also the many relationships, commitments, and contributions that made those accomplishments possible.

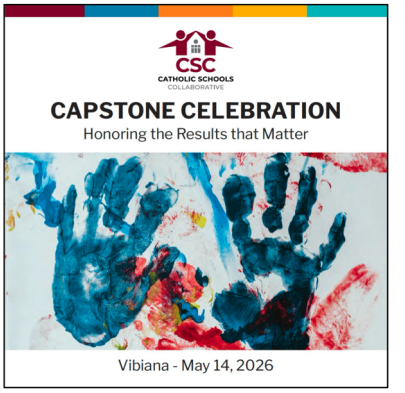
FUNDER VOICE

> "CSC has provided leadership and training that bring renewed vigor to the Whole Child model pioneered by Catholic sisters."

Sabrina Wong
Senior Program Officer, Catholic Sisters Initiative, Conrad N. Hilton Foundation


BUILT TOGETHER
This work was built through partnership — shaped by the shared labor, trust, and commitment of many.
Students, whose effort, resilience, and voice shaped the work.
Families, who brought trust, partnership, and presence.
Teachers, who carried stronger practice into the classroom each day.
School leaders, who led with greater clarity and purpose.
Expert partners, who expanded what schools could offer students.
CSC staff, who brought sustained support, expertise, and care to the work.
Funders, who invested in lasting, measurable change.
The work lives on in the people, practices, and stronger conditions now in place for students to thrive.
Every Student. Every Day.
CSC
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS
COLLABORATIVE

Built Together was one of the Capstone Celebration exhibition panels. It recognized that CSC's work was strengthened by many hands and affirmed a core truth of the model: lasting school improvement depends on shared ownership, not individual effort alone. By naming the people who helped build the work, the panel also pointed toward what must endure—strong relationships, clear responsibility, and a continued commitment to students and schools.



From CSC's May 14, 2026 Capstone Celebration: Built Together exhibition panel, teachers, parents and students participating in one of the evening's interactive activities, and the event program.

A VIEW ALONG THE WAY

What the Programs Looked Like

From evidence to instruction, intervention, ownership, and opportunity

The results presented elsewhere in the Blueprint show what changed. The Justice Walk shows the values that gave the work direction, and the Growth in Learning, Belonging, and Capacity displays make the larger pattern of change visible. This view moves closer to the classroom. It describes the instructional architecture that sat underneath those results: how schools gathered evidence, chose and implemented programs, responded when students needed something different, and helped students and families understand learning for themselves.

This is not intended as a catalog of every product CSC used or every activity offered in every school. Schools entered the Collaborative at different times, with different needs and different levels of readiness. Programs were selected and combined accordingly. What became increasingly consistent was the logic of the work: begin with multiple forms of evidence; protect strong grade-level core instruction; add adaptive support and more intensive intervention without lowering expectations; monitor implementation and growth; and make learning visible enough that teachers, leaders, families, and students could act on what they saw.

1. Evidence Before Programs

CSC's assessment system was designed for decision-making rather than testing for its own sake. Schools combined demographic, program, outcome, and perception data with daily classroom evidence so that a student's progress could be understood from more than one angle. Benchmark assessments at the beginning, middle, and end of the year established common reference points; curriculum assessments, adaptive platforms, classroom work, observations, and student and family perceptions filled in the picture between those points.

STAR Reading and STAR Math provided norm-referenced measures of achievement and growth. Lexile and Quantile measures helped connect current performance to the complexity of reading and mathematics students were ready to encounter next. Oral reading fluency measures added information about decoding, accuracy, automaticity, and foundational literacy. Curriculum and adaptive-program data showed what was happening much closer to the moment of instruction. The purpose was triangulation: no single score was expected to tell the whole story.

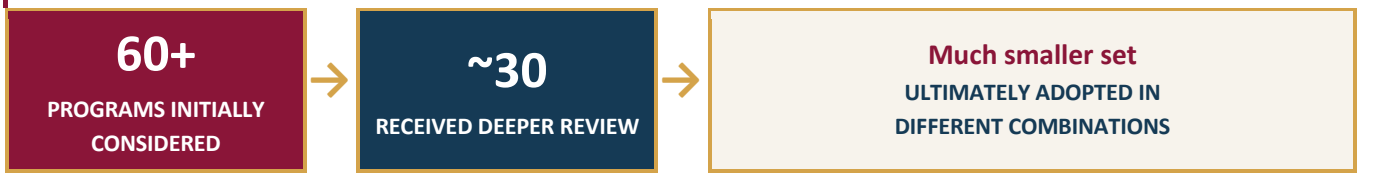
Teachers and leaders reviewed these measures together in data meetings and instructional planning. The useful question was not 'What is the score?' but 'What does this student need next, and what do we need to change?' That shift made assessment part of instruction. It informed grouping, pacing, intervention, enrichment, program review, and eventually student goal-setting.

A simple instructional cycle

See	Understand	Respond	Monitor	Own
Gather multiple measures of learning and implementation.	Identify strengths, gaps, readiness, and patterns.	Adjust core instruction, adaptive support, intervention, or enrichment.	Check progress frequently and examine fidelity.	Help students, families, teachers, and leaders act on the evidence.

2. Choosing Programs as Part of a System

Program adoption followed the same evidence-to-action logic. CSC did not begin with a preferred product and ask schools to fit themselves around it. Each partnership began with needs analysis: student performance, classroom practice, existing resources, leadership structures, intervention systems, staffing, and school priorities. Schools retained local decision-making while CSC helped research alternatives, arrange demonstrations and pilots, review evidence, and consider the practical demands of implementation.



Adoption was treated as an implementation decision, not a purchasing decision.

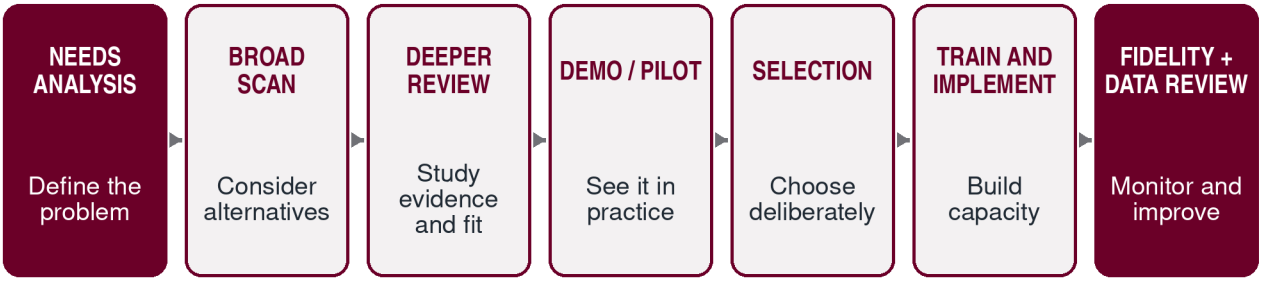
The reading and language arts process illustrates the scale of that work. More than sixty programs and systems were initially considered, approximately thirty received deeper review, and a much smaller set of core and intervention programs was ultimately used in different combinations. The important lesson was not the number of products examined. It was that we treated adoption as an **implementation decision, not a purchasing decision.**

Adoption also required schools to ask whether a program could fit into a coherent instructional system. CSC looked for the relationship between core curriculum and intervention, the usefulness of embedded assessment, the quality of teacher and student resources, the capacity for personalization, and the amount of training and ongoing support required. Cost mattered, but so did the hidden costs of implementation: teacher time, scheduling, devices, data management, coaching, and the disruption created by replacing existing routines. The strongest choice was not necessarily the program with the most features; it was the one a school could implement well and sustain long enough to produce results.

Once a program was selected, the work shifted from adoption to implementation. Teachers needed opportunities to learn the instructional model, see it demonstrated, plan together, examine student work and data, and solve problems as they emerged. Principals needed enough knowledge of the program to recognize what faithful implementation looked like in classrooms and to distinguish reasonable adaptation from abandonment of the model. CSC's role therefore extended beyond helping schools choose programs to helping schools build the conditions in which those programs could work. This became one of the Collaborative's clearest lessons: selection matters, but implementation, coherence, leadership, and persistence matter at least as much.

From Adoption to Implementation

CSC treated adoption as a process, not a purchase.



Implementation continues through professional learning, coaching, modeling, collaborative planning, data review, and ongoing leadership support.

A strong program alone did not guarantee strong results. Successful adoption depended on the conditions surrounding implementation. Programs were less likely to succeed when:

- teachers were not adequately prepared or supported in using them;
- implementation varied substantially from classroom to classroom;
- school leaders did not monitor implementation or address problems;
- assessment results were disconnected from instructional decisions;
- schools introduced too many competing initiatives at the same time.

TEACHER VOICE

> "No more guesswork—consistent teaching and consistent expectations are driving real results."
>
> **Judith Vasquez**
> Teacher, 4th & 5th Grade ELA/Social Studies, St. Vincent School

For that reason, CSC treated adoption as the start of the implementation process, not the end. Schools were supported through professional learning, coaching, classroom modeling, collaborative planning, data review, and ongoing leadership support. Over time, the goal was coherence: fewer disconnected initiatives and a clearer relationship among core curriculum, assessment, adaptive learning, intervention, and daily teacher practice.

What We Looked For in a Program

A compact decision lens for moving from need to sustainable implementation.

Criterion	Key Question
Need and standards alignment	Addresses an identified student or school need and supports required learning expectations
Evidence and instructional design	Uses a credible instructional approach with a clear theory of how students learn
Assessment and differentiation	Produces useful evidence and supports response to different learner needs
Usability	Teachers and students can realistically use it well in daily school conditions
Professional-learning demands	Training, coaching, planning time, and implementation support are feasible
Technology and data requirements	Infrastructure, access, interoperability, privacy, and reporting demands are manageable
Cost and sustainability	Initial and continuing costs can be supported beyond short-term funding
Fit within the instructional system	Adds coherence and a defined function rather than becoming another disconnected initiative

3. Reading and Language Arts: A Layered Literacy System

The literacy program was built around a developmental progression: students first needed to learn to read successfully and then increasingly use reading to learn, analyze, communicate, and think critically. Across the grades, literacy included reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing, and visual representation rather than treating reading as a single isolated skill.

In the early grades, the core program deliberately built literacy from the ground up. World of Wonders supported Transitional Kindergarten through oral language, storytelling, songs, movement, vocabulary, phonemic awareness, concepts of print, and the attention and social interaction needed for formal reading instruction. In Kindergarten through Grade 2, Superkids or Wonders 2023 provided systematic, synthetic phonics and carefully sequenced work with sound-symbol relationships, high-frequency words, decoding, fluency, spelling, handwriting, vocabulary, comprehension, and writing. Cumulative and recursive review was important: students repeatedly returned to previously learned skills and applied them in increasingly complex texts.

Wonders 2023 provided the K-5 core literacy framework in participating schools. Its thematic units integrated literature and informational text with writing, research, discussion, science and social studies content, and explicit instruction in grammar, spelling, handwriting, speaking, and listening. A typical literacy block combined rich whole-group anchor-text instruction and teacher modeling with partner reading, vocabulary and comprehension work, and writing directly connected to reading. The block then moved into flexible small-group instruction, where teachers could use leveled texts, Reader's Theater, phonics review, fluency practice, vocabulary work, comprehension instruction, or targeted intervention according to current student evidence.

Unit and progress-monitoring assessments were built into this cycle so that grouping, pacing, and support could change as students learned.

The key design principle was that students who were behind continued to encounter grade-level learning. WonderWorks provided just-in-time support connected to the core curriculum, while adaptive practice personalized skill development. Students with substantial unfinished foundational learning could receive more intensive daily support through Reading Horizons. For fluent readers in the upper grades, Achieve3000 increased access to appropriately challenging informational text and academic vocabulary. These layers were intended to help students catch up while continuing to move forward.

In middle school, StudySync extended the work into increasingly complex literature, nonfiction, discussion, research, and analytical writing. Full-length novels and nonfiction works were also taught through SIMPLE Literacy lessons adapted from the Character-Based Literacy approach, connecting close reading and writing with ethical reflection, empathy, character, and decision-making. Literacy therefore became both an academic pathway and a way for students to make meaning from increasingly complex ideas.

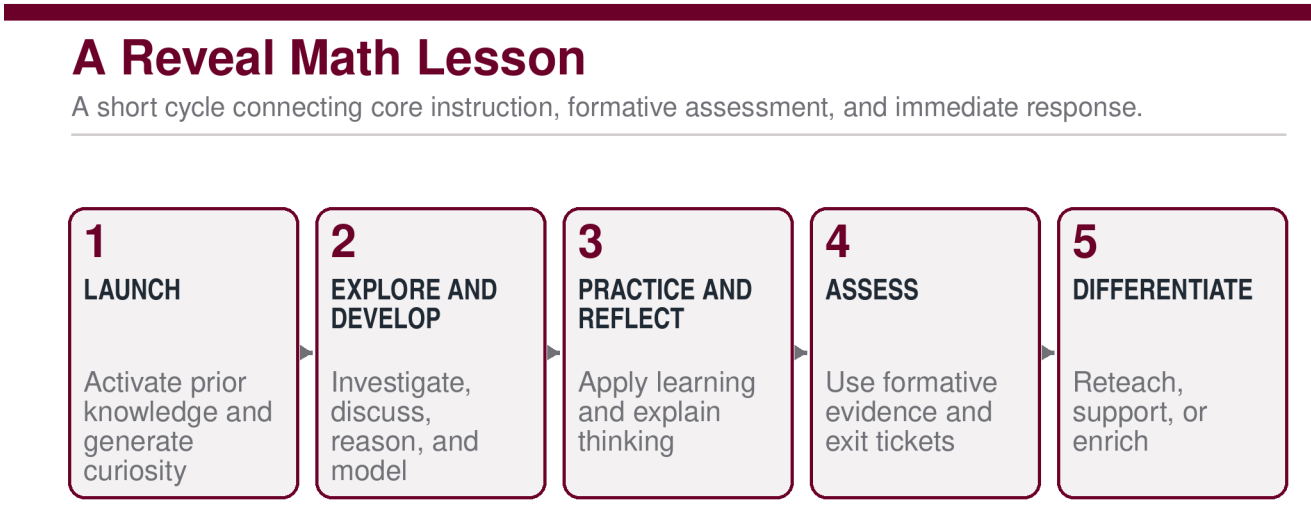
The literacy layers at a glance

Layer	Purpose	Examples used	What it protected
Core literacy	Teach grade-level literacy and communication	World of Wonders, Superkids, Wonders, StudySync, SIMPLE Literacy	Access to coherent, increasingly complex learning
Adaptive / targeted support	Personalize practice and address current needs	Wonders Adaptive, Achieve3000	Growth without removing students from the core
Intensive intervention	Rebuild missing foundational reading skills	Reading Horizons Discovery / Elevate	A pathway back toward successful grade-level reading

4. Mathematics: Grade-Level Learning Plus Personalized Growth

Mathematics followed a parallel design: a common grade-level core protected access to rigorous mathematics while adaptive systems addressed prerequisite gaps or provided acceleration. In Transitional Kindergarten, mathematics was embedded in thematic, hands-on exploration of counting, patterns, shapes, measurement, number sense, and mathematical language. Beginning in Kindergarten and continuing through Grade 5, Reveal Math provided the core instructional framework. It emphasized conceptual understanding as well as procedural fluency: students were expected to reason, discuss, represent, solve, explain, and apply mathematics rather than simply reproduce a procedure.

Reveal organized lessons around a recurring instructional cycle. In Launch, a problem, context, visual model, or question activated prior knowledge and generated mathematical curiosity. During Explore and Develop, students investigated ideas through guided exploration, hands-on work, collaborative problem-solving, discussion, teacher questioning, and modeling. Practice and Reflect asked students to apply new learning and consider the strategies and connections they were developing. Assess used quick checks, observations, student explanations, and digital exit tickets to reveal current understanding. Differentiate then turned that evidence into action through flexible groups, reteaching, targeted practice, math centers, enrichment, or additional teacher-guided instruction. The model's power lay in the connection among these steps: assessment did not sit at the end of instruction; it helped determine what happened next.



A particularly important feature was the short feedback loop between instruction and response. Daily digital exit tickets gave teachers and students immediate information about understanding. The results could then trigger reteaching, small-group instruction, additional practice, or enrichment. Assessment was therefore embedded in the lesson cycle rather than reserved for the end of a unit.

Adaptive mathematics extended that responsiveness. ALEKS, ALEKS Adventure, and DreamBox created individualized pathways based on demonstrated readiness. Students could strengthen unfinished prerequisite learning without being held permanently below grade level, while students ready to move faster could advance. **In the middle grades, this same commitment to opportunity supported an accelerated pathway into Algebra in Grade 8.** The significance of that pathway was not only higher mathematics performance; it was earlier access to the sequence of courses that opens future STEM and college options.

5. Science and Social Studies: Building Knowledge Through Inquiry

Literacy and mathematics were foundational, but CSC's instructional vision extended beyond foundational skills. Students also needed broad knowledge of history, geography, culture, civic life, science, engineering, and the systems that shape the world around them. Social studies and science therefore served two purposes: they developed disciplinary knowledge and reasoning while also giving students meaningful contexts in which to read complex informational text, build academic vocabulary, write from evidence, discuss ideas, and solve problems.

In social studies, schools used Teachers' Curriculum Institute (TCI) programs built around active, inquiry-based learning. Rather than relying primarily on textbook reading and recall, students worked with simulations, primary sources, collaborative activities, geographic investigations, visual materials, maps, charts, timelines, and questions that asked them to examine events from multiple perspectives. Geography and regional studies helped students understand physical and cultural regions, migration, economic systems, environmental issues, and global interdependence. The result was a content-rich setting in which literacy, discussion, perspective-taking, and civic understanding reinforced one another.

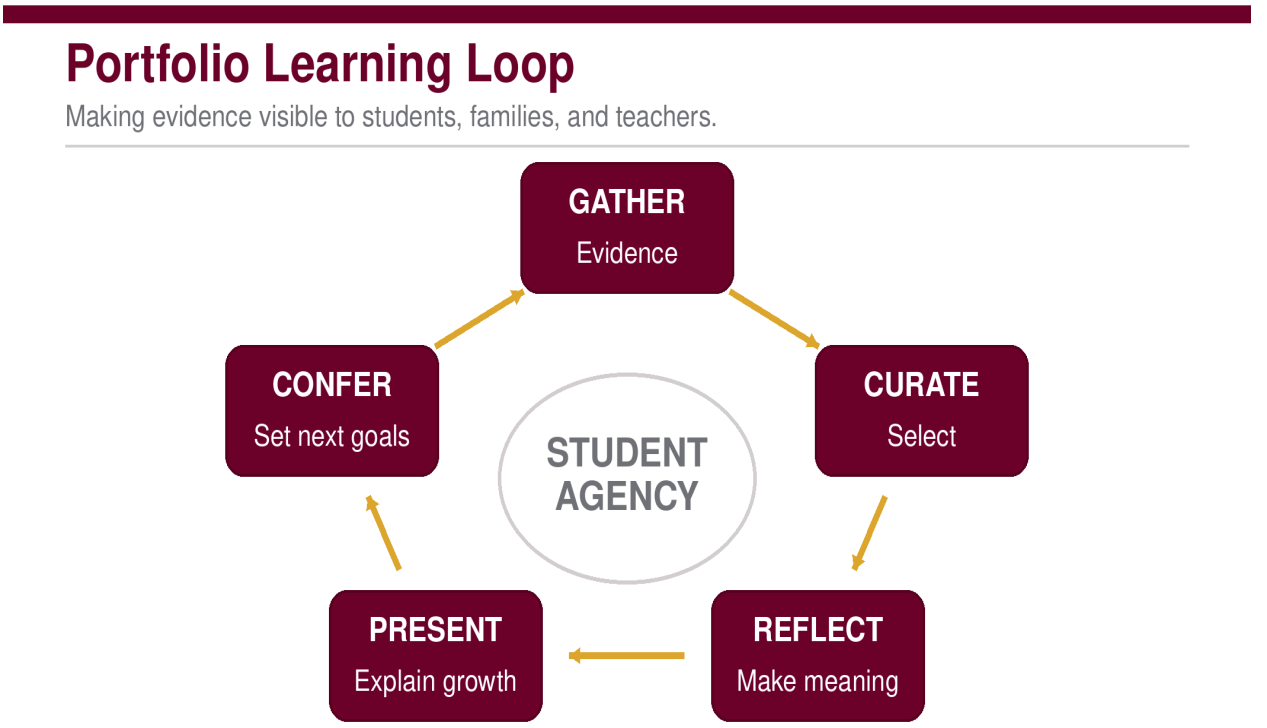
Science used the same emphasis on active learning. TCI science programs engaged students in experiments, observation, engineering tasks, modeling, collaborative problem-solving, and discussion across physical, life, and earth science. Students were expected to ask questions, investigate phenomena, analyze evidence, test ideas, and communicate conclusions rather than simply memorize scientific facts. These experiences also created natural opportunities for the claim-evidence-reasoning work, projects, and exhibitions that appeared elsewhere in CSC's portfolio and student-agency efforts.

Including these disciplines made the instructional model more complete. Strong readers and mathematicians need something worthwhile to read about, investigate, question, and explain. Content knowledge strengthens comprehension; inquiry gives literacy and numeracy a purpose; and projects allow students to apply skills across disciplines. In that sense, science and social studies were not additions around the edges of the academic program. They helped turn foundational skills into broader intellectual capacity.

6. Making Learning Visible: Portfolios, Exhibitions, and Student-Led Conferences

Standardized and curriculum assessments answered important questions, but they could not show everything students were learning to do. Projects, exhibitions, performances, presentations, and portfolios added evidence of application, communication, creativity, problem-solving, persistence, and reflection. They also changed who had access to the evidence. Students and families could see and discuss learning; adults could not analyze it alone.

The portfolio work brought these ideas together most explicitly. A portfolio was conceived as a curated record of growth rather than a folder of completed assignments. Students gathered evidence from multiple sources, selected work that mattered, reflected on what it showed, presented it to others, and conferred with teachers and important people in their lives about goals and next steps. The process formed a continuous loop: gather, curate, reflect, present, confer.



The 2025-26 demonstration project explored portfolios and student-led conferences in schools ready to extend this work using the Bulb portfolio platform. Portfolios could include evidence of literacy and numeracy, problem-solving, future readiness, self-management, and meaning-making. Because evidence could come from curriculum platforms, learning management systems, cloud drives, projects, performances, or classroom work, the portfolio provided a place to connect learning that otherwise lived in separate systems.

STUDENT VOICE

> "When I see my progress, I know what to do next—so I can keep getting better."
>
> **6TH GRADE STUDENT**
> Sts. Peter and Paul School

This was also a natural bridge between assessment and agency. Students were asked to understand their own evidence, describe growth, identify challenges, and help determine what should come next. Families could see more than a score or report card, and conferences could become conversations with students rather than conversations about students.

7. What Programs Looked Like: Details Matter – Results Matter

The details matter because they reveal the operating system beneath the results described elsewhere in the Blueprint. CSC did not produce growth simply by placing new programs in schools. The work depended on a chain of connected decisions: understand students through multiple measures; choose programs for a defined need; protect coherent grade-level core instruction; provide adaptive or intensive support when evidence called for it; prepare teachers to implement the model well; monitor both student response and fidelity; and keep adjusting without abandoning the larger design. When those pieces aligned, data stopped being something schools collected after learning and became information they used to shape learning as it happened. Programs stopped being isolated purchases and became parts of an instructional system. Professional learning became less about exposure to new ideas and more about building the capacity to carry out shared practices consistently. And students increasingly moved from being the subjects of assessment to participants who could see, explain, and act on their own growth.

The programs themselves changed over the life of CSC, and no school used every component in exactly the same way. That is why the lasting contribution is not a product list. **It is an architecture for improvement: know students well; choose strong tools for a defined purpose; implement them with fidelity; connect assessment to immediate instructional response; provide additional support without reducing opportunity; and make progress visible to the people closest to the learning.**

Seen alongside the Justice Walk and the displays on Growth in Learning, Belonging, and Capacity, this closer view shows the mechanism beneath the outcomes. Justice required access. Access required coherent programs and responsive support. Responsive support required useful evidence and capable adults. And over time, the strongest expression of that system was a student who could understand where they were, recognize how they had grown, and participate in deciding where to go next.

Part V - Leadership Lessons

Leadership Perspective

These lessons emerged from nearly a decade of implementation in under-resourced Los Angeles Catholic schools. They are not universal rules or conclusions drawn from a controlled study. They reflect repeated patterns across schools, initiatives, partnerships, and different phases of CSC's development.

The central leadership lesson is that coherence must be actively built and continually protected. It does not arise from programs, funding, data, technology, or partnerships on their own. Each of those can contribute to improvement, but only when they are connected through a shared purpose, clear leadership, aligned expectations, active management, and school ownership.

Evidence of Ownership and Continuation

At closeout, the clearest evidence of sustainability was the specificity with which school leaders described what they intended to continue once CSC's direct support ended. Across the Capstone reports, principals identified repeatable routines, assigned roles, fiscal choices, and whole-child practices—not simply broad aspirations or appreciation for CSC.

The evidence goes beyond appreciation. Principals named the routines, roles, systems, investments, and expectations they were committed to carrying forward. Those commitments make school-level ownership visible across instructional leadership, data use, resource protection, continuation planning, and whole-child culture.

> *The goal was not permanent dependence on CSC. It was to help schools develop the knowledge, tools, routines, and leadership capacity to carry the work forward.*

CAPACITY BUILT. CAPACITY OWNED.

What school leaders committed to carry forward

The clearest sustainability signal was specificity: leaders named repeatable systems, not general aspirations.

Capacity domain	Evidence of capacity built	What leaders committed to continue
1. Instructional Leadership	Leaders describe walkthroughs, feedback and coaching cycles, PLC and pacing routines, shared leadership, and support for new teachers.	Continue walkthroughs, feedback cycles, protected collaboration, pacing tools, coaching, teacher leadership, and new-teacher support.
2. Budget / Infrastructure	Schools name fiscal reviews, resource roadmaps, multiyear priorities, Title and donor strategies, onboarding tools, and clearer role ownership.	Protect curriculum and instructional resources through budgets, Title funds, donor stewardship, enrollment strategies, annual reviews, and role clarity.
3. Data Fluency	Data is described as part of school culture: assessment-review cycles, data-to-action protocols, student ownership, parent meetings, and intervention planning.	Continue assessment review, data-to-action protocols, student data tools, parent data meetings, intervention planning, and training for new staff.
4. Continuation Planning	Leaders identify repeatable systems to carry forward through calendars, handbooks, role assignments, resource plans, leadership check-ins, and improvement priorities.	Embed commitments in calendars, handbooks, roles, budgets, leadership check-ins, and improvement priorities—and revisit them with school teams.
5. Whole-Child Culture	Leaders intend to continue expectations, restorative practices, behavior supports, SEL and wellness, family engagement, student ownership, and belonging.	Continue sitewide expectations, restorative conversations, SEL and wellness supports, partner coordination, family communication, and student ownership.

Source: CSC Network School Partner Capstone reports submitted by principals and compiled May 30, 2026; CSC School-by-School Sustainability Grid; CSC Sustainability Milestone Rubric and closeout review materials.

> CSC built real, transferable capacity. School leaders leave with stronger tools, routines, infrastructure, and whole-child practices they have named as their own.

School-Level Evidence of Ownership

The network-level pattern was supported by school-specific commitments. The examples below are illustrative rather than exhaustive; they show principals identifying the structures their own schools must protect, resource, monitor, and carry forward.

Mother of Sorrows. Leaders named continued teacher mentorship, review of STAR and curriculum data, restorative and relationship-centered practices, and the protection of academic, operational, and cultural systems.

St. Vincent School, Los Angeles. Leaders committed to embedding routines in calendars and handbooks, continuing walkthroughs and PLC data-to-action protocols, formalizing data governance, designating Data Champions, and maintaining curriculum and onboarding tools.

St. Jerome School. Leaders committed to continuing walkthroughs, feedback, coaching, professional learning, teacher collaboration and mentorship, structured data discussions, annual program reviews, and core whole-child partnerships.

Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal. Leaders identified continued curriculum coordination, assessment review, student data sheets, parent data meetings, a multiyear resource roadmap, restorative practices, wellness, and family engagement.

Across the remaining CSC Network schools. Leaders similarly named differentiated instruction, teacher support, student-performance discussions, careful budgeting, donor and enrollment strategies, family communication, SEL, student ownership, and mission-aligned expectations.

These commitments matter because they show that leaders understood not only what CSC provided, but what their schools must now protect, resource, monitor, and carry forward. The evidence does not establish uniform implementation or guaranteed permanence. It does demonstrate that capacity was transferred into school-level knowledge, decisions, roles, and routines. Some practices were deeply embedded and others were still developing, but principals were able to name the work as their own and articulate how they intended to continue it.

WHAT WORKED	WHAT DID NOT
Coherence over fragmentation; strong leadership and instructional ownership; sustained partnership architecture, funding, and follow-through.	Isolated pilots, weak implementation conditions, underfunded systems, external institutional pressures, competing initiatives, and assumptions that access automatically produced capacity or results.

> *Taken together, these commitments provide the clearest evidence that CSC concluded its work with meaningful capacity built and transferred into school-level ownership.*

What Worked

- A coherent theory of change and one integrated model rather than a collection of unrelated programs.
- School-facing implementation that connected curriculum, assessment, coaching, social-emotional supports, family engagement, technology, and operations.
- Strong principal and instructional-leader engagement, protected collaboration time, walkthroughs, feedback cycles, and data routines.
- Professional learning tied directly to implementation and reinforced through coaching and follow-up.
- Active partnership architecture: clear outcomes, selected expertise, ongoing management, multi-school scale, and aligned philanthropic support.
- Use of multiple measures to understand student learning, climate, implementation, and capacity.
- A willingness to assess, transform, expand, or end programs based on relevance and evidence.
- Maintaining a consistent Whole Child vision while allowing the strategy, systems, and implementation approach to evolve in response to evidence and experience.
- Serving as an independent coordinating organization capable of identifying needs across schools, aligning resources, managing partners, and maintaining a network-wide view.
- Building sustained relationships with principals, instructional leaders, educators, partners, and funders rather than relying on short-term program delivery.
- Aligning philanthropic investment with an integrated school-improvement strategy rather than allowing individual funding opportunities to fragment the work.

- Meeting schools at different starting points while maintaining clear expectations for participation, accountability, and growth.

What Did Not

- Isolated pilots or programs that were too advanced, geographically restricted, directed toward the wrong audience, or disconnected from a network-wide strategy.
- Assuming that access to a program, resource, or training automatically produced implementation or capacity.
- Attempting to build improvement on fragmented curriculum, incomplete assessment participation, unstable staffing, or weak leadership ownership.
- Underfunded implementation, unrealistic expectations that low-resource schools could sustain complex systems without adequate staffing or support, and competing initiatives that disrupted coherence.
- Accepting new funding or partnership opportunities that redirected, duplicated, or displaced an established strategy without first examining what the school had already built and what the new initiative would require.
- Expecting a lone principal to carry school operations, instructional leadership, implementation management, and continuous improvement without sufficient administrative capacity.
- Overreliance on external experts without a deliberate plan for school-site ownership and transfer.
- Implementation weakened when CSC was expected to carry responsibilities that required school- or system-level authority. External coordination and support could strengthen local leadership, but they could not replace timely decisions, consistent participation, staffing stability, or accountability within the school.

A VIEW ALONG THE WAY

When Funding Pulls the Work Off Course

The cost of misaligned opportunity

One of the most difficult threats to coherence did not come from a lack of resources. At times, it came from new resources introduced without sufficient alignment to the work already underway.

Schools serving under-resourced communities understandably find it difficult to decline funded opportunities. A new program, partner, staff position, technology platform, or instructional initiative may arrive at little or no direct cost to the school. The offer can appear entirely additive: more support, more expertise, more capacity. CSC's experience showed that the calculation is more complicated.

Every new initiative carries implementation costs, whether or not the school pays the invoice. It consumes leadership attention, instructional time, scheduling capacity, teacher learning, student participation, data systems, communication, and organizational focus. It may also duplicate, interrupt, or displace work in which a school has already invested substantial time and effort.

CSC encountered situations in which schools had built coherent instructional pathways, adopted programs deliberately, trained teachers, monitored implementation, and begun seeing meaningful student progress. New funded opportunities were sometimes introduced without a full understanding of that existing strategy. Because the resources addressed genuine needs, they could be difficult to decline even when the proposed initiative competed with work already producing value.

The cost of such changes was not always immediately visible. A new initiative might serve one group of students while disrupting a broader schoolwide pathway; introduce a new instructional sequence without considering what came before or after it; or redirect teacher and leadership attention just as established practices were beginning to take hold. CSC then had to help schools reassess schedules, student pathways, training, data, vendor commitments, and implementation measures in order to restore coherence.

This was not resistance to outside ideas. CSC regularly changed programs when evidence warranted it. **The distinction was whether change emerged from evidence and strategy or simply from the availability of funding.**

The experience led to an important lesson: **a funded opportunity is not automatically an improvement opportunity.** In an under-resourced environment, declining resources can feel irresponsible. Yet there are times when saying *no*—or *not yet*—protects a larger investment and gives existing work the time required to produce results.

This requires strategic discipline from everyone involved. Funders and partners benefit from understanding a school's existing strategy, student pathways, commitments, and evidence before introducing something new. School leaders must consider not only what an opportunity provides, but also what accepting it will require, change, or displace. Implementation partners can help make those tradeoffs visible. The ability to decline a misaligned opportunity is not ingratitude. It is an expression of leadership responsibility.

Funding should strengthen a school's strategy, not become its strategy.

Before accepting a significant new funded initiative, leaders should be able to answer: **What problem does this solve? How does it fit what we are already doing? What will it add, duplicate, displace, or interrupt? Who will carry the additional work? Which students will benefit—and could others lose access to an existing pathway? How will we know that the change is worth the cost?**

New resources are most valuable when they enter through the school's strategy rather than around it.

What Implementation Confirmed and Revealed

Several conclusions became clearer only through implementation over time. Taken together, they show where CSC's original assumptions were confirmed, where the model required refinement, and which conditions most affected progress, capacity, and sustainability.

- CSC's original premise was that an effective, data-driven Whole Child model required simultaneous attention to a coherent academic program; a nurturing culture and climate; consistent family engagement; student supports; and meaningful social-emotional learning opportunities. These elements were interdependent. None could be assumed to produce the others on its own.
- Implementation confirmed that improvements in culture, climate, and student supports did not automatically produce academic excellence. These conditions were essential, but academic improvement also required aligned curriculum, strong instruction, reliable assessment, intervention, educator capacity, and explicit measurement of student learning. A Whole Child approach that does not define and measure academic outcomes cannot demonstrate whether its academic promise was fulfilled.
- Technology was not a back-office support. It became essential infrastructure for curriculum, assessment, data access, professional learning, identity management, communications, and operations.

- Data could reveal needs and progress, but data alone could not change instruction. Leaders and educators needed aligned curriculum, time, coaching, and routines to act on it.
- Capacity was uneven and could not be inferred from participation. It had to be demonstrated through routines, decisions, fidelity, ownership, and continuity during change.
- An organizational closeout could become a final implementation phase focused on ownership, documentation, assessment, and responsible transfer.
- Leadership quality and continuity often established the ceiling for implementation. Strong programs and resources could not overcome prolonged leadership instability or the absence of follow-through. Weekly classroom observation and feedback were critical to ensuring implementation with fidelity.
- Leadership capacity was structural, not personal. When the principal and instructional-leadership functions were not separately and adequately resourced, implementation depended too heavily on individual stamina and external support.
- Under-resourcing was not merely an initial barrier that implementation would eventually eliminate. Staffing, compensation, enrollment, operating capacity, and access to shared infrastructure continued to shape what schools could maintain.
- School ownership and financial self-sufficiency were not the same. A school could own its leadership, routines, instructional practice, and decisions while still requiring shared services, system-level investment, or continued philanthropic support.
- Equity required more than giving schools access to resources. It required the adult capacity, time, systems, technology, and accountability necessary to use those resources well.
- Capacity development was uneven and non-linear. Progress could be real while remaining vulnerable to leadership turnover, staffing changes, funding loss, or competing priorities.

Conditions and Constraints

CSC implemented its model within schools experiencing chronic financial and operational pressures, including staffing shortages, compensation disparities, leadership turnover, enrollment challenges, limited administrative capacity, fragmented systems, and competing initiatives. These conditions did not diminish the ability or potential of the schools and their students, but they materially affected the pace, intensity, consistency, and sustainability of implementation.

CSC could address some of these conditions through funding, shared services, coaching, technology, partner coordination, and direct implementation support. Other conditions required decisions and investments by school governing bodies, sponsoring systems, diocesan leadership, or other institutions with authority beyond CSC.

- **Underfunding.** Improvement expectations frequently exceeded the operating resources available to schools.
- **Staffing and compensation.** Vacancies, turnover, salary disparities, and the absence of a genuinely resourced instructional-leadership position disrupted continuity, overloaded principals, and increased dependence on external support.
- **Leadership readiness and continuity.** Principal engagement, decision-making, and follow-through varied and could change rapidly during leadership transitions.
- **Competing initiatives.** Uncoordinated programs, system requirements, and shifting priorities could fragment attention and weaken implementation.

- **Assessment participation and data quality.** Incomplete participation, inaccurate rosters, or inconsistent administration limited what CSC and schools could responsibly conclude.
- **Fragmented authority.** CSC could establish expectations and conditions for its support, but it did not control school staffing, budgets, governing decisions, or broader system priorities.
- **External dependencies.** Technology platforms, vendors, expert partners, specialized services, and philanthropic funding remained necessary for some functions.
- **Time.** Capacity required repeated cycles of implementation, feedback, adjustment, and ownership. It could not be produced through a short-term intervention.

Governance and Institutional Alignment

The Need for Clearly Authorized, Locally Accountable Governance

Catholic social teaching provides a direct lens for evaluating governance through the principle of subsidiarity. Pope Leo XIV writes that “whatever can be carried out by individuals, families, intermediary organizations and local communities should not be carried out by higher-level authorities” (Leo XIV, 2026, para. 31). The Catechism likewise teaches that higher-order communities should support lower-order communities, when necessary, without depriving them of their proper functions (Catholic Church, 1997, para. 1883).

Applied to school improvement, subsidiarity does not mean leaving schools without support, coordination, or accountability. It means placing authority as close as possible to students and educators, matching responsibility with demonstrated competence, and ensuring that diocesan or central structures strengthen—rather than displace—capable local leadership. When decision-making is centralized far from the work, without sufficient proximity, competence, or accountability, the distance between authority and implementation can weaken improvement efforts.

CSC did not set out to reform school governance or seek authority over participating schools. Its role was to identify needs, develop strategy, coordinate resources, fund and manage implementation, build capacity, and support school ownership. CSC's experience revealed, however, that successful implementation required a clearly identified governing partner with both the recognized authority and the practical ability to make and protect a multi-year commitment.

Effective governance did not require centralizing authority within CSC. It required clear decision rights, transparent and consistently applied expectations, documented responsibilities, accountability for participation and follow-through, and a process for addressing competing priorities or external pressures. The people most directly accountable for the school and its students also needed a meaningful role in authorizing and protecting the work.

In a parish-based Catholic school, the external implementation partner should establish the partnership directly with both the parish pastor and the school principal. Where the pastor is the recognized governing authority, the pastor should affirm the school's institutional commitment and continuity of the agreement, while the principal assumes responsibility for day-to-day implementation. Both should sign a multi-year agreement defining roles, participation requirements, funding, data access, accountability, decision-making, change procedures, and conditions for continuation or exit.

In a district-operated public school or charter school, the implementation partner should execute the agreement with both the school leader and the entity holding actual authority over the commitments required by the

model, such as the superintendent or an authorized district designee, the charter governing board, or the charter management organization, as applicable. Before implementation begins, the agreement should identify who controls budget, staffing, curriculum, instructional time, data access, procurement, compliance, and continuation of the partnership. District mandates, collective-bargaining obligations, charter terms, and authorizer requirements that may affect implementation should be identified in advance. The school leader must retain sufficient operational authority to carry out the work, while the governing entity must be willing and able to protect the agreement through leadership changes, funding decisions, and competing initiatives.

Diocesan or central-office departments should not automatically become parties to or managers of a school-level implementation partnership. If another entity has formal authority or practical influence over funding, staffing, curriculum, assessment, or school participation, that influence should be disclosed before the agreement is signed. Any role in the implementation should be explicit, limited, and documented, and should not permit priorities or commitments to be changed outside the agreed decision-making process.

Aligned governance might have enabled CSC and the schools to make greater progress. At a minimum, a consistent governance structure could have reduced the time and energy required to revisit priorities, clarify responsibilities, and renew shared commitments, allowing greater attention to remain focused on implementation and improvement. If the local governing partners cannot make and protect the required commitment, the engagement should not proceed at full scope.

Institutional Avoidance and the Cost of Naming the Problem

CSC revealed foundational problems that were not always readily acknowledged by institutions with authority, expertise, or influence. These included serious literacy gaps, fragmented curriculum, inconsistent assessment participation, limited data transparency, weak instructional-leadership infrastructure, and inadequate systems for responding to what the evidence revealed.

CSC did more than identify these conditions. It developed and implemented a coherent plan to address them through aligned curriculum, reliable assessments, professional learning, instructional leadership, data routines, intervention, technology, Whole Child supports and coordinated partnerships.

Evidence, however, did not automatically produce institutional action. At times, acknowledging the scale of a problem was treated as a threat to the larger system rather than as a responsibility to students. Some institutions appeared reluctant to recognize the problem until they could develop, control, or claim a solution of their own. This delayed alignment, limited support for CSC's work, and placed the burden on CSC to sustain urgency around needs that the evidence had already made visible.

Expertise and institutional stature did not automatically make an organization an effective partner. Some potential partners approached collaboration through the lens of the programs they already offered, the work they wanted to advance, or the capacity they had available, rather than beginning with the needs identified by schools and the shared implementation strategy. Effective partnership required a willingness to listen, adapt, align with the larger model, share accountability, and contribute to school-defined outcomes.

The Opportunity of Aligned Institutional Partnership

PARTNER VOICE

> In our tradition, accompaniment is sacred. CSC accompanies schools until they can walk on their own—and that's a ministry of its own kind.
>
> **Sister Adella Armentrout**
> Education Councilor, Daughters of Charity

CSC's experience also points to an important opportunity. Future implementations should intentionally seek institutional partners that understand collaboration as shared responsibility, not as an opportunity to place, promote, or control their own programs.

Effective institutional partners begin with the needs of schools and the agreed strategy. They listen, adapt, share expertise and accountability, respect school and community agency, and use their authority, resources, and influence to remove barriers rather than create additional ones.

Strong partnerships with aligned school systems, higher-education institutions, funders, and community organizations could provide continuity, credibility, specialized expertise, shared infrastructure, and broader institutional support. When those partners are committed to the same outcomes and willing to protect the coherence of the work, they can reduce unnecessary roadblocks, limit the need to revisit established priorities, and accelerate meaningful implementation.

The lesson is not that institutional partnership should be avoided; it is that partnership must be selected and structured around demonstrated alignment, mutual accountability, and a genuine understanding of collaboration.

Threats to Coherence, Capacity, and Continuity

CSC's experience showed that meaningful progress could be weakened, redirected, or reversed when the conditions surrounding a school changed. Naming these threats does not diminish the progress achieved. It explains why capacity and sustainability must be evaluated over time and cannot depend upon school effort alone.

- Chronic underfunding and compensation disparities that destabilize staffing and make sustained implementation difficult.
- Leadership turnover without succession planning, resulting in the loss of knowledge, routines, relationships, and accountability.
- Competing programs or system mandates introduced without regard to the existing strategy, evidence, capacity, or stage of implementation.
- Fragmented authority and institutional interference, particularly when decisions affecting implementation are made by entities removed from school-level work.
- Loss of school agency, including the imposition of priorities that do not reflect identified needs, evidence, or existing commitments.
- Erosion of assessment participation, data access, or transparency, making it difficult to identify needs, measure progress, or hold leaders and systems accountable.
- Dismantling the model into separate programs and losing integration across academics, leadership, social-emotional learning, families, technology, data, and operations.
- Withdrawal of shared infrastructure or funding without an adequate continuation plan, especially when schools are expected to absorb responsibilities and costs they cannot sustainably carry.

- Short-term philanthropic priorities that reward new programs or visible innovation without funding the staffing, coordination, implementation, and infrastructure required for success.
- Drift away from the Whole Child commitment, including approaches that narrow improvement to test performance or weaken dignity, belonging, equity, student agency, and community voice.

Responsible Claims About Sustainability

CSC's evidence supports claims of meaningful progress, consistent patterns of improvement, and demonstrated capacity development. It does not support claims of uniform success, sole causation, or guaranteed permanence.

The complete CSC Capstone Sustainability Milestone Rubric in Part VII - Practical Tools identifies the milestones and evidence sources used to assess school-level ownership and continuing vulnerability during the 2025-26 Capstone Year.

Progress. Measurable improvement in student outcomes, instructional practice, school culture, participation, systems, or access during the period of CSC support.	**Demonstrated capacity.** Evidence that leaders and educators could independently use routines, tools, data, instructional practices, and decision-making structures.
Continuing vulnerability. Capacity or progress that remained dependent upon particular leaders, staffing stability, adequate funding, shared infrastructure, expertise, or support.	**Permanence.** Sustained implementation and outcomes over time and through changes in leadership, staffing, funding, or context. CSC's closeout evidence cannot establish permanence; that requires continued observation after the conclusion of CSC's work.

> *CSC built capacity that is now embedded in some schools, seeded in others, and visible across the broader school ecosystem it served.*

Recommendations for Future Leaders

1. Begin with a coherent theory of change rather than a collection of programs.

2. Assess school readiness, leadership conditions, and capacity before determining the scope and pace of support.

3. Establish a reliable academic foundation, including aligned curriculum, assessments, instructional expectations, and participation routines.

4. Treat leadership and operational vitality as essential components of educational improvement.

5. Fund the leadership team the model requires. Do not build an implementation plan that assumes one principal can simultaneously hold the operational and instructional demands of a complex school-improvement model.

6. Build data systems that educators can use to guide practice while also supporting clear, credible reporting to boards and funders.

7. Design technology intentionally as part of the instructional and operational model, including security, privacy, access, and responsible innovation.

8. Select and coordinate expert and institutional partners through a shared strategy, demonstrated alignment, defined outcomes, clear roles, active management, and accountability.

9. Protect coherence when new funding appears. Evaluate each grant, program, staff position, or partner against the established strategy before accepting it; decline or defer opportunities that would fragment, duplicate, displace, or narrow work already producing value.

10. Require school agency, participation, and ownership while recognizing the realities of under-resourced communities.

11. Provide sufficient time, funding, staffing, coaching, and implementation support for capacity to develop.

12. Establish the long-term ownership and resourcing plan at the beginning of implementation rather than treating sustainability as an end-stage conversation. Identify which functions can be school-owned, shared, centrally supported, or philanthropically funded. Transferring leadership, routines and decision-making does not require every cost or specialized function to be transferred to an individual school.

13. Distinguish measurable progress from permanent sustainability and communicate both honestly.

Principles Worth Preserving

Future-ready leadership requires more than embracing or resisting change. It requires the judgment to determine what should evolve, what must endure, and whether a proposed innovation genuinely serves students, educators, families, and the common good. This is discussed further in the future-ready synthesis in Part VI - Beyond CSC.

- Whole Child, Whole School, Whole Community.
- Integration by design across the Four Pillars.
- Site-infused implementation rather than temporary external programming.
- Meet schools where they are without leaving them there.
- School agency and buy-in as conditions of sustainability.
- Evidence used for improvement, accountability, and honest learning.
- Technology, data, partnerships, and funding as cross-cutting infrastructure rather than isolated functions.
- Funding should strengthen the strategy—not become the strategy.
- Dignity, belonging, rigor, and high expectations for students and adults.
- Continuous improvement without claims of perfection or guaranteed permanence.
- Capacity is developed with schools - not delivered to them - and school ownership does not require schools to carry the work alone.

Part VI - Beyond CSC

CSC's work should not be presented as a fixed package that can be copied unchanged. The value of the Blueprint lies in making the model, decisions, evidence, limitations, and implementation conditions visible so future organizations can adapt the work responsibly.

The broadly transferable contribution is the architecture: an integrated, data-driven Whole Child, Whole School, Whole Community approach that connects leadership, operations, academic coherence, social-emotional support, students, families, community partners, technology, data, professional learning, and funding around a shared purpose.

Future-Ready by Design: Looking Toward 2036

No one can know exactly what schools will look like in 2036. New technologies, changing demographics, economic shifts, and new knowledge about learning will reshape education in ways that cannot be fully predicted. The purpose of looking ahead is therefore not to prescribe a single future. It is to identify plausible changes, consider what they may require of schools, and clarify which commitments should remain non-negotiable.

What May Change

Learning may become more personalized and evidence rich. Adaptive and AI-enabled tools may help identify strengths and needs, offer immediate feedback, translate content, and provide different pathways into a concept. Assessment may rely less exclusively on periodic tests and more on projects, performances, demonstrations, and portfolios that show growth over time. Used well, these approaches could give educators, students, and families a fuller picture of learning while preserving common standards and high expectations.

The teacher's role may also continue to evolve. Technology can reduce time spent on routine grading, paperwork, translation, scheduling, and basic communications, but it cannot replace the wisdom, judgment, encouragement, and relationships that make education meaningful. Teachers may increasingly work as designers of learning, mentors, facilitators of collaboration, and interpreters of evidence. At the same time, learning may become more authentic and interdisciplinary as students investigate real problems that connect literacy, mathematics, science, technology, the arts, social studies, faith, and the needs of their communities.

As artificial intelligence becomes more capable, distinctly human capacities may become even more valuable: curiosity, creativity, ethical reasoning, empathy, communication, collaboration, resilience, discernment, and wise decision-making. AI literacy and digital citizenship will therefore need to move beyond optional technology lessons. Students will need to understand how automated systems work, recognize their limitations, evaluate information and bias, protect privacy, understand cybersecurity, and use powerful tools responsibly. Successful schools will use technology to strengthen communication and access, while continuing to build community through trust, shared purpose, and meaningful human connection.

What Must Endure

Five principles offer a durable foundation for Catholic education in this changing environment. Human dignity remains the starting point for every educational decision. Technology must serve people rather than organize schooling around the demands of a tool. The whole child remains the goal, with intellectual, spiritual, emotional, physical, moral, and social development understood as inseparable. Academic excellence prepares students not only for individual success, but also for service, justice, stewardship, and the common good. And hope enables schools to approach change with confidence that faith, wisdom, and human creativity can shape innovation toward worthy purposes.

The central challenge is not deciding whether to embrace or resist technological change. It is discerning when a tool deepens learning, expands access, strengthens relationships, or supports sound judgment - and when it distracts from those purposes. Future-ready education is therefore neither screen-free nor screen-dominated. It is discerning by design.

The goal is not more technology. It is better learning, stronger human judgment, and the flourishing of the whole child.

WHAT MAY CHANGE	WHAT MUST ENDURE	HOW SCHOOLS DECIDE
• Learning becomes increasingly personalized. • Teachers work as learning designers, mentors, and interpreters of evidence. • Students demonstrate mastery through projects, performance, and portfolios. • Learning becomes more authentic and interdisciplinary. • AI literacy and digital citizenship become essential.	• Human dignity is the starting point. • The whole child remains the goal. • Relationships and professional judgment remain indispensable. • Learning prepares students for service and the common good. • Faith, community, and hope continue to define Catholic education.	• Begin with how students learn best. • Use technology when it improves access, feedback, personalization, creation, or communication. • Consider the purpose, quality, and context of screen use. • Preserve print, discussion, art, movement, prayer, service, and reflection. • Ensure technology serves people, never the reverse.

Selected foundations: CSC/Results Matter, How Might School Be Different in 2036? and Five Principles for Catholic Education in 2036; UNESCO, Reimagining Our Futures Together: A New Social Contract for Education (2021); OECD, Learning Compass 2030; Pope Francis, Laudato Si' (2015) and Fratelli Tutti (2020); and Pope Leo XIV, Magnifica Humanitas (2026).

> *Viewed together, CSC's academic systems, data practices, whole-child supports, leadership development, family engagement, and technology infrastructure were not separate initiatives. They formed the architecture of an integrated, future-ready model centered on student learning and whole-child development.*

Potential Applications

Catholic educators in dioceses, networks, and individual schools may adapt the model to strengthen under-resourced schools, coordinate multi-school initiatives, build instructional and operational capacity, and align philanthropy with measurable school improvement.

Public, charter, and independent education. The Four-Pillar framework, improvement cycle, data practices, partnership architecture, technology design, and capacity-transfer principles may be applicable across sectors, but governance, funding, labor, accountability, community context, and scale will require adaptation.

Higher education. Universities may use elements of the model in educator preparation, school partnerships, leadership development, clinical practice, research-practice partnerships, technology governance, and support for community-based schools.

Conditions for Responsible Adaptation

CSC's model can be adapted responsibly only when the following conditions are present or intentionally built:

- A coherent theory of change with clearly defined student, school, and community outcomes.
- Committed leadership, readiness, and explicit ownership at both the central and school levels.
- Reliable academic, data, technology, and operational foundations.
- Sufficient staffing, time, funding, coaching, and implementation support, including distinct principal and instructional-leadership capacity appropriate to the scale of the model.
- Meaningful school and community agency, accompanied by disciplined partner coordination.
- Measures that distinguish access, participation, implementation, outcomes, and capacity, together with honest communication about variation, limits, dependencies, and sustainability.

These conditions provide the readiness and design foundation. The recommendations below describe how future organizations can establish, strengthen, and protect them.

Recommendations for Future Organizations

1. Begin with a coherent theory of change rather than a collection of programs.

2. Assess school readiness, leadership conditions, and capacity before determining the scope and pace of support.

3. Establish a reliable academic foundation, including aligned curriculum, assessments, instructional expectations, and participation routines.

4. Treat leadership and operational vitality as essential components of educational improvement.

5. Fund the leadership structure a data-driven whole child model requires. At this level of implementation, principal and instructional-leadership functions must both be explicitly resourced; they should not depend on one person absorbing both jobs.

6. Build data systems that educators can use to guide practice while also supporting clear, credible reporting to boards and funders.

7. Design technology intentionally as part of the instructional and operational model, including security, privacy, access, and responsible innovation.

8. Coordinate expert partners through a shared strategy, defined outcomes, clear roles, active management, and accountability.

9. Require school agency, participation, and ownership while recognizing the realities of under-resourced communities.

10. Provide sufficient time, funding, staffing, coaching, and implementation support for capacity to develop.

11. Distinguish measurable progress from permanent sustainability and communicate both honestly.

Limits of Transferability

The Blueprint should not imply that CSC demonstrated the same results in public, charter, independent, or higher-education settings. These are potential applications of CSC principles and structures, not validated replications of the model.

Future implementers should preserve the model's integrated purpose while adapting program choices, governance, funding, technology, staffing, measures, and timelines to local conditions. Fidelity to CSC should mean fidelity to the essential design principles and disciplined learning process - not mechanical replication of every program or platform.

The Guiding Principle

For any school or organization carrying this work forward, structures, technologies, and strategies will continue to evolve. But the central measure of the work should remain unchanged: does it serve **every student, every day**?

> **Whatever changes in the years ahead, the guiding principle remains:**
> **Every Student, Every Day.**

Every Student, Every Day buttons from CSC Capstone Celebration, May 14th 2026.

> *The enduring lesson of CSC is not that one organization found a universal formula. It is that the conditions surrounding students and schools can be intentionally connected, strengthened, measured, and learned from - when the work is designed as a coherent whole.*

PARTNERS IN THE WORK

Our School Partners

Above all, CSC was shaped and strengthened through long-standing partnerships with the schools it served. Each relationship was distinct - from focused instructional, wellness, leadership, and student-support initiatives to multi-year whole-school improvement. School leaders, educators, staff, students, and families were not simply recipients of services; they were co-creators who tested ideas, examined evidence, strengthened practice, and helped build environments in which students could flourish academically, socially, emotionally, and spiritually.

CSC's accomplishments have always been shared.

Built through trust, learning, and shared purpose

SCHOOL PARTNERS

63 SCHOOLS

- All Souls School
- Ascension Elementary School
- Assumption Elementary School
- Blessed Sacrament Elementary School
- Divine Savior Elementary School
- Dolores Mission School
- Guardian Angel Elementary School
- Holy Cross STEM Ventura
- Holy Name of Jesus Elementary School
- Immaculate Conception School - Los Angeles
- Immaculate Conception Elementary School - Monrovia
- Mary Star Elementary School
- Mother of Sorrows Elementary School
- Nativity School
- Our Lady of Guadalupe Elementary School
- Our Lady of Guadalupe - Oxnard
- Our Lady of Talpa Elementary School
- Our Lady of the Holy Rosary School
- Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal School
- Our Lady of Victory Elementary School
- Resurrection Elementary School
- Sacred Heart Elementary School
- San Miguel Elementary School
- Santa Isabel Elementary School
- Santa Teresita Elementary School
- St. Agnes Elementary School
- St. Aloysius Elementary School
- St. Anne School - Santa Monica
- St. Bridget of Sweden
- St. Cecilia Elementary School
- St. Columbkille Elementary School
- St. Elizabeth School
- St. Eugene Elementary School
- St. Francis Assisi School
- St. Frances X. Cabrini Elementary School
- St. Gertrude
- St. Ignatius of Loyola Elementary School
- St. Jane Frances de Chantal
- St. Jerome Elementary School
- St. John Chrysostom Elementary School
- St. Joseph School - Pomona
- St. Joseph School - Hawthorne
- St. Joseph School - Santa Ana
- St. Lawrence Brindisi Elementary School
- St. Louis of France School
- St. Malachy Elementary School
- St. Mary Elementary School
- St. Mary School - Escondido
- St. Matthias DLI
- St. Michael Elementary School
- St. Odilia Elementary School
- St. Paul Dual Language Academy
- St. Patrick's DLI
- Sts. Peter and Paul Elementary School
- St. Raphael Catholic School
- St. Sebastian School
- St. Teresa de Avila
- St. Thomas the Apostle Elementary School
- St. Turibius Elementary School
- St. Vincent School - Los Angeles
- St. Vincent de Paul School - Phoenix
- STRIVE LA - Afterschool
- Verbum Dei Jesuit High School

With profound gratitude for the openness, creativity, dedication, and trust of every school community.

PARTNERS IN THE WORK | CONTINUED

A Network of Expertise and Support

CSC's work in schools was strengthened by a broad network of higher education institutions, curriculum and technology providers, Catholic, public, and charter systems, and expert partners. Their knowledge, research, training, tools, coaching, and specialized services expanded what schools could offer students, educators, leaders, and families.

HIGHER EDUCATION PARTNERS 25

- California State University, Chico
- California State University, Dominguez Hills
- California State University, Fresno
- California State University, Los Angeles
- California State University, Northridge
- California State University, San Bernardino
- California State University, San Diego
- College of the Desert
- Foothill College
- Loyola Marymount University
- Loyola University, Chicago
- Mount St. Mary's University
- New York University
- San Bernardino Valley College
- Santa Clara University
- Stanford University
- State University of New York, Stony Brook
- University of California, Berkeley
- University of California, Los Angeles
- University of California, Riverside
- University of Chicago - Consortium on School Research
- University of Dayton
- University of Northern Colorado
- University of San Diego
- University of Southern California

CATHOLIC EDUCATION PARTNERS 9

- Archdiocese of Los Angeles
- Archdiocese of Portland
- Archdiocese of San Francisco
- Daughters of Charity Province of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton
- Diocese of Oakland
- Diocese of Phoenix
- Diocese of San Diego
- Diocese of San Jose
- Diocese of Stockton

PUBLIC & CHARTER EDUCATION PARTNERS 4

- Alliance College-Ready Public Schools
- Compton Unified School District
- Los Angeles Unified School District
- Rocketship Public Schools

CURRICULUM & EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY 28

- Achieve 3000
- ActivelyLearn
- ALEKS
- Apple Education
- Beyond Labz
- Bulb
- CK-12
- Clever
- DreamBox Learning
- Education Walkthrough
- FOSS
- Google for Education
- GradeLink
- Great Minds
- Houghton-Mifflin
- Instructure
- McGraw-Hill Education
- MetaMetrics
- Microsoft Learn
- NWEA
- OpenAI
- Reading Horizons
- Redbird
- Research Press
- Spel Technologies
- TCI
- UiPath
- Zaner-Bloser

EXPERT PARTNERS 17

- Michele Borba - Thrivers
- Butterfly Behavior Consulting
- Center for Powerful Public Schools
- Conscious Teaching - Grace Dearborn
- Corita Art Center
- Envision Learning
- Everybody Dance LA!
- FranklinCovey - Leader in Me
- ExEd (Excellent Education Development)
- Bradley Geise - Education for the Future
- Doug Grove - Multidimensional Education
- Helen B. Landgarten Art Therapy Clinic
- LDA Services
- Maestro En Casa
- Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE)
- Power My Learning
- Schola Cantorum of the Pacific

TOGETHER, THESE PARTNERSHIPS CREATED A POWERFUL NETWORK OF SUPPORT.

Their collaboration expanded schools' capacity to serve students effectively, strengthen academic and social-emotional supports, and sustain meaningful improvement over time.

PARTNERS IN THE WORK | CONTINUED

Philanthropic & Community Partners

CSC's work was strengthened and sustained by philanthropic and community partners whose investment, trust, and practical support expanded what schools could access. Their generosity and collaboration helped CSC align resources around school priorities, respond to emerging needs, and carry the work forward over time.

PHILANTHROPIC PARTNERS 32

- Ahmanson Foundation
- Ambassador Frank Baxter
- Amgen
- Andy Knox
- Antonio Felix
- Bruce & Gretchen Willison
- Burton G. Bettingen Corporation
- California Community Foundation
- Carrie Estelle Doheny Foundation
- Carrie Shea-Tilton
- Catholic Community Foundation of Los Angeles
- Claire Cacciapaglia
- Conrad N. Hilton Foundation
- Dan Murphy Foundation
- Frank McHugh-O'Donovan Foundation
- Gries Family Charitable Fund
- Joan A. Payden
- John H. & Cynthia Lee Smet Foundation
- Michael & Janet Feeley
- Moley Family Foundation
- Patricia Duque Byrne Foundation
- Porticus North America
- Ralph M. Parsons Foundation
- Raskob Foundation
- Roxbury Properties
- Shea Family Charities
- Specialty Family Foundation
- Steinmetz Foundation
- Susan Moley
- The Thomas & Dorothy Leavey Foundation
- Vision of Hope
- William H. Hannon Foundation

With deep gratitude for the generosity, trust, and shared purpose that sustained this work.

COMMUNITY FUNDING PARTNERS 13

- American Business Bank
- Broadway Bank
- Citizens Business Bank
- City National Bank
- East West Bank
- Grandpoint Bank
- LA Regional COVID-19 Recovery Fund
- Local Initiatives Support Corporation
- OneWest Bank
- Pacific Western Bank
- Southern California Edison
- The Greater LA Education Foundation
- United Way of Greater Los Angeles

THROUGH THE GENEROSITY OF THESE PARTNERS, CSC EXPANDED WHAT SCHOOLS COULD ACCESS.

Funding, financial services, institutional reach, and community relationships helped CSC respond to school priorities and strengthen the conditions surrounding students and educators.

TOGETHER, THESE PARTNERS HELPED TURN SHARED COMMITMENT INTO RESOURCES, ACCESS, AND OPPORTUNITY.

Their funding, financial expertise, institutional reach, and community relationships helped CSC respond to school priorities and strengthen the conditions surrounding students and educators.

Part VII - Practical Tools

Using These Practical Tools

Part VII translates CSC's experience into practical resources that leaders can use to examine real conditions, make decisions, monitor implementation, and plan for ownership and sustainability. It begins with an anonymized case study drawn from actual schools and leadership situations and then moves through tools for readiness, planning, data use, implementation fidelity, transition, and sustainability.

The five practical tools that follow are adaptable resources informed by CSC's implementation experience, documented practices, and lessons learned. They are not prescriptive requirements or reproductions of forms used verbatim by CSC. Readers should adapt them to their own governance, resources, school conditions, and community context. The CSC Capstone Sustainability Milestone Rubric is included as an original CSC closeout instrument.

CSC CASE STUDY EXAMPLE

A VIEW ALONG THE WAY

Where Would You Lead?

An applied CSC leadership case study

How to Use This Case Study

The following case study is drawn from actual schools and leadership situations CSC encountered. School names and identifying details have been changed to protect confidentiality, but the conditions, tensions, and leadership decisions presented here reflect real experience.

CSC used cases like this in leadership retreats, coaching conversations, and planning sessions to help leaders distinguish symptoms from underlying conditions, assess readiness, protect what was working, identify what needed to change, and determine what should happen first. The schools worked with CSC for different lengths of time and experienced very different improvement journeys. Although they served similar communities and had access to many of the same resources and supports, their trajectories differed strikingly.

As you read, move from examining what CSC did to considering what you would do. Imagine that responsibility for each school now rests with you. What would you preserve? What would you change? What would you do first? Which conditions can leadership realistically change, and which may be much harder to overcome? These are the questions Isabella faces, and they are the questions this practical tool asks the reader to consider.

CSC CASE STUDY EXAMPLE CASE STUDY CONTINUES

Four Schools, One Decision

The Invitation

Isabella had expected the meeting to last twenty minutes. The superintendent had asked her to stop by the diocesan office late Friday afternoon, and nothing about that was unusual. During her years as principal of School A, Isabella had become one of the people the superintendent called when she wanted a principal's perspective on a new initiative, an honest assessment of a problem, or occasionally help with another school.

This conversation was different.

"I want you to think about next year," the superintendent said.

Isabella smiled. "I think about next year every day."

"I mean *your* next year."

The superintendent closed the folder in front of her. "You've built something remarkable at School A. Your faculty is stable. Your systems work. Your teachers use the curriculum. They use the data. They intervene when students aren't learning. They don't wait for someone from the diocese to tell them what to do."

Isabella started to respond, but the superintendent continued. "And that's why I want you to consider whether your work there is finished."

The question caught her off guard. "Finished?"

"Not finished," the superintendent corrected herself. "Maybe *established*. School A doesn't depend on you in the way it once did. That's a sign of good leadership."

She opened the folder again. "I have three schools that need a principal. I think you could make a difference at any one of them. Or you can stay exactly where you are." She slid four sheets of paper across the table.

Isabella recognized all four school names. She also knew choosing among them wouldn't be as simple as picking the school with the lowest test scores. The four schools were less than ten miles apart and served remarkably similar communities. Most students were Latino, with a significant number of Black students, and most families faced the economic pressures common throughout the surrounding urban neighborhoods. None of the schools enjoyed a demographic advantage that could easily explain its results.

All four had participated in many of the same Catholic Schools Collaborative initiatives. All four had been given access to many of the same curricula, assessments, professional learning, coaching, and data systems.

Their trajectories had nevertheless been strikingly different.

LEADERSHIP QUESTION | With similar communities and access to many of the same supports, what explains four different trajectories?

CSC CASE STUDY EXAMPLE CASE STUDY CONTINUES

School A | Embedded Capacity

Isabella knew this school better than any spreadsheet could describe it. When **School A** began its improvement work, the faculty didn't agree on everything. Teachers questioned new programs. Some worried that common curriculum would limit their creativity. Others initially viewed assessment data as something produced for administrators rather than information useful for instruction. But the school had one enormous advantage: stability. The principal stayed. Most of the teachers stayed. Expectations stayed.

When the faculty adopted a program, they implemented it. When the data suggested something wasn't working, they examined why. Teachers compared results across classrooms and grade levels, identified students who needed additional support, and adjusted instruction without abandoning the underlying system every time results were disappointing. Over time, common practice became ordinary practice. Teachers no longer talked about "Isabella's reading program" or "the CSC assessment." They talked about *our reading program*, *our students*, and *our data*.

That consistency produced results. Student achievement rose steadily. Growth rates remained strong. More students reached grade-level expectations each year, and teachers increasingly believed that students who entered behind could catch up. Success created its own form of collective confidence. When one grade level struggled, the question was rarely, "What's wrong with these students?" It was more likely to be, "What do we need to do differently?"

The school was not perfect. Enrollment was stable rather than growing, finances remained tight, and teachers still faced the academic and social challenges found throughout the community. But the school had become what Isabella had hoped for years earlier: a place where improvement did not depend on the next program or the charisma of one leader.

That was precisely why the superintendent believed Isabella might be able to leave.

EVIDENCE TO NOTICE | Stability, fidelity, shared data use, and shared responsibility have made improvement part of the school's ordinary practice.

CSC CASE STUDY EXAMPLE CASE STUDY CONTINUES

School B | Momentum Under Financial Strain

Ten years earlier, few people would have predicted that **School B** would become a success story. For years, the school seemed overwhelmed. Student behavior consumed enormous amounts of instructional time. Teachers complained that students were unmotivated and families insufficiently supportive. Faculty meetings often turned into discussions about problems adults believed they could not control. The school introduced new instructional programs, but implementation was inconsistent. Some teachers embraced them. Others waited. Results remained disappointing.

The pattern reinforced itself. Poor results confirmed teachers' belief that the school's challenges were beyond their control, and that belief made consistent implementation even more difficult. Then something began to change. It did not happen because of a new program. The faculty gradually became tired of being a school where nothing seemed to work.

Teachers began establishing common expectations for student behavior. They stopped allowing students to move from classroom to classroom encountering entirely different rules, and teachers supported one another when students tested those expectations. They took back the hallways, classrooms, and common spaces. As behavior became more predictable, teachers had more time to teach.

Then another change occurred. Several teachers began noticing that classrooms implementing the adopted instructional programs most consistently were producing better results. The difference was difficult to ignore. Faculty conversations slowly shifted from whether the programs worked to whether the school was actually implementing them. Teachers began planning together, examining student data together, and comparing instructional practices. When students struggled, teachers increasingly treated the problem as something the faculty could solve collectively.

For several years, progress was slow and uneven. Then the results moved. During the last two years, student growth accelerated dramatically. Achievement increased across multiple grade levels. Students who had previously made little progress began catching up. Perhaps more importantly, the adults began expecting success. The school had developed something it once lacked: collective efficacy—the belief that, together, the faculty could make a measurable difference in student learning.

The superintendent leaned toward Isabella. *"If you looked only at their last two years,"* she said*, "you might think this was an easy assignment."*

"It isn't?" Isabella asked.

"The academics aren't the problem anymore." She pointed to the financial page.

The school had run chronic budget deficits. Tuition revenue barely covered current staffing, facilities needed repairs, and there was little financial cushion. Enrollment was stable but too small to close the gap.

"They've finally learned how to succeed," the superintendent said. *"The question is whether they can afford to."*

LEADERSHIP TENSION | Academic momentum is real, but chronic deficits threaten the conditions that produced it.

CSC CASE STUDY EXAMPLE CASE STUDY CONTINUES

School C | Adoption Without Accountability

The numbers at **School C** were not disastrous. That was part of the problem. They were never bad enough to create a crisis. They were simply never very good.

The school had officially adopted many of the same instructional programs used at School A. Faculty members attended training. Curriculum materials were purchased. Assessment calendars were distributed. School improvement plans described implementation goals. But what happened inside classrooms was another matter. Some teachers used the adopted curriculum closely. Others supplemented it extensively. Some replaced substantial portions with materials they preferred. A few essentially continued teaching as they always had.

Everyone knew. The principal knew. The pastor knew. Teachers knew.

For years, leaders responded by encouraging greater consistency. They discussed fidelity at faculty meetings, arranged additional professional development, asked teachers to follow pacing guides, and reviewed assessment results. But when individual teachers resisted, little happened. There was always a reason not to push too hard. A teacher had been at the school for twenty-five years. Parents loved another teacher. Someone threatened to retire. Someone else said the program did not meet the needs of "my students." The pastor disliked conflict, and the principal feared losing teachers in a difficult hiring market.

Gradually, an unwritten rule replaced the written improvement plan: teachers could participate in the common instructional program if they wanted to.

Student results reflected that reality. Scores occasionally increased slightly, then flattened. One grade might improve while another declined. No sustained pattern of growth emerged across the school. Eventually, leaders largely stopped pressing the issue. Teachers did what they believed was best. The school remained open, enrollment remained relatively stable, and families generally liked their teachers. No dramatic scandals or crises emerged. But little evidence showed that students were learning substantially more than they had a decade earlier.

The diocese had now lost patience. Next year, it planned to restructure the school's academic program. Curriculum requirements would be mandatory. Common assessments would be required. Pacing expectations would be monitored. Teachers would be expected to demonstrate implementation.

The superintendent looked at Isabella. *"The diocese can mandate curriculum,"* she said*. "It can't mandate courage."*

Isabella understood what she meant. A new principal would have to do what previous leaders had avoided: establish expectations, confront resistance, and decide what would happen when a teacher simply refused.

DECISION POINT | The next leader must establish non-negotiables, confront resistance, and make follow-through visible.

CSC CASE STUDY EXAMPLE CASE STUDY CONTINUES

School D | Change Without Coherence

School D had no shortage of ideas. That was its problem.

Ten years earlier, enrollment was about 190 students. The school had wanted to improve academic performance and distinguish itself from neighboring schools, so it began with a comprehensive school-improvement model emphasizing curriculum fidelity and data-driven instruction. Before that approach could mature, enthusiasm shifted toward STEM. The school purchased equipment, reorganized parts of the curriculum, and promoted itself as a STEM school.

Then leadership changed. A new principal became interested in Finnish education. Teachers attended workshops and redesigned aspects of instruction around what became informally known as "the Finland model." Another leadership transition followed, and attention shifted toward practices drawn from Irish schools. Then came a renewed emphasis on foundational literacy and a "phonics first" approach.

Each initiative had advocates. Each had research supporting at least some of its practices. Each promised improvement.

None lasted long enough for the school to determine whether it worked.

Four principals led the school during the decade. Teachers learned an important organizational survival skill: wait. When a new initiative arrived, experienced teachers learned not to oppose it openly. They attended the training, put up the posters, and used the new vocabulary.

Then they waited.

Eventually, something else would replace it.

Parents noticed the changes as well. So did students. Faculty members were exhausted. Families were confused about what the school stood for. Teachers who had once enthusiastically volunteered for improvement committees became reluctant to participate. Meanwhile, enrollment continued falling—from approximately 190 students ten years earlier to 171, then 154, 138, 121, 106, 94, and finally a projected enrollment of approximately 80 students for the coming year.

The superintendent tapped the enrollment projection. *"They don't have much time."*

Isabella looked through the school's data. There were good teachers there. There were good ideas there. There had been good programs there. But no organizational memory was strong enough to hold any of them in place. The school had spent a decade searching for what would transform it.

The search itself had become one of the greatest obstacles to transformation.

FIRST MOVE | Stop introducing new initiatives. Build coherence, restore trust, and determine what can be sustained.

CSC CASE STUDY EXAMPLE CASE STUDY CONTINUES

Four Schools | One Community

Isabella spread the four profiles across the conference table. The similarities were striking. The schools served essentially the same population. Their students faced many of the same economic and social challenges. All four wanted stronger enrollment. All four had access, at various points, to similar professional learning, instructional resources, assessment systems, and improvement support.

Yet the schools had produced four very different organizational cultures.

At **School A**, stability, fidelity, data use, and shared responsibility had produced sustained growth. At **School B**, years of struggle eventually taught the faculty that coordinated adult action could change student outcomes. The school appeared academically poised for continued success, but its finances threatened that progress.

At **School C**, adults had adopted the language of improvement without consistently accepting its obligations. Individual autonomy had repeatedly prevailed over collective commitments, and leaders had avoided the conflict necessary to change that pattern. At **School D**, repeated attempts at innovation had produced neither coherence nor sustained improvement. Constant change had exhausted the community, weakened trust, and contributed to an enrollment crisis that threatened the school's survival.

LEADERSHIP QUESTION

The superintendent stood. *"I don't need an answer today," she said. "But don't decide solely on the basis of which school needs you most."*

Isabella looked again at the four profiles. *"What should I be asking?"*

"Where does your leadership have the greatest chance of producing lasting improvement?" the superintendent said. *"And if you chose each school, what would you have to do first?"*

The Decision | What Leadership Can Change

That evening, Isabella returned to **School A**. The campus was nearly empty. She walked past classrooms she had visited hundreds of times. Student work covered the walls. Pacing charts and learning targets appeared beside classroom doors. In one room, assessment folders were stacked on a table for the following week's teacher meeting.

None of it looked extraordinary anymore.

That struck her. Years earlier, nearly every one of those practices required discussion, training, reminders, monitoring, and occasionally difficult conversations. Now they were simply how the school operated. Leaving would mean trusting that the culture was stronger than the leader who had helped build it. Staying would mean asking a different question: What could School A become next?

Then she thought about **School B**. The faculty there had already accomplished perhaps the hardest part of school improvement. They had begun to believe in one another. A new principal would inherit momentum, not resistance. But could she stabilize the finances without disrupting the academic culture that had finally emerged?

School C presented a different challenge. The school did not need another instructional program. It needed leadership willing to establish a small number of non-negotiable expectations and enforce them. Could she do that without destroying the relationships that held the school together? How many teachers would leave? How many might have to?

And then there was **School D**. Isabella wondered whether the most important thing a new principal could announce on the first day might be: We are not starting anything new.

Perhaps the school needed fewer ideas, not more. But with only eighty students projected for next year, would there be enough time to rebuild trust, establish coherence, improve instruction, and convince families that the school had a future?

Four schools. Four leadership problems. Four very different definitions of success.

DECISION FRAME

Isabella took out a sheet of paper and wrote the four names. Beside each, she added three headings:

What must be preserved?

What must change?

What must happen first?

Then she added one final question at the bottom of the page:

Where is the probability that good leadership will produce lasting improvement greatest?

She stared at the page for several minutes. The superintendent had asked her to choose a school. Isabella was beginning to understand that the real decision was about something larger. She was choosing which conditions for change she believed leadership could create—and which conditions leadership might not be able to overcome.

She picked up her pen.

Discussion and Reflection

1. **Diagnose each school.** What is the central problem or opportunity at School A, School B, School C, and School D? Distinguish symptoms from underlying causes.
2. **Assess readiness for improvement.** Which school currently has the strongest organizational capacity for sustained improvement? Which has the weakest? What evidence supports your judgment?
3. **Identify the first move.** Assume Isabella becomes the principal of each school. What are the first three actions she should take during her first 90 days at each school?
4. **Consider what should not change.** What existing strengths should Isabella protect at each school? Where could an aggressive new principal inadvertently make the situation worse?
5. **Consider fidelity and autonomy.** At what point does teacher autonomy become an obstacle to school improvement? How should a principal respond when a teacher refuses to implement an agreed-upon instructional program?
6. **Consider leadership responsibility.** Is the central problem at School C primarily a curriculum problem, a faculty problem, a leadership problem, or some combination? What evidence would you gather before acting?
7. **Consider change fatigue.** Would you introduce any new academic initiative at School D during Isabella's first year? Why or why not? What would you stop doing?
8. **Consider sustainability.** School B has finally developed a culture capable of producing strong academic results, but chronic budget deficits threaten its future. How should Isabella balance financial sustainability with protecting the conditions that produced its recent success?
9. **Estimate the probability of success.** If Isabella led each school for five years, estimate the probability that the school would achieve both sustained academic improvement and organizational stability. What assumptions drive your estimates?
10. **Rank the choices.** Rank the four schools from **1 (the assignment you would most recommend Isabella accept)** to **4 (the assignment you would least recommend)**. Defend your ranking.
11. **Make the decision.** Should Isabella remain at School A or accept one of the three other principalships? What does she gain—and risk—with your choice?
12. **Return to the CSC Blueprint.** Looking across all four schools, what appears to matter most for sustained school improvement: programs, leadership, faculty stability, implementation fidelity, data, collective efficacy, resources, or something else? Which of these conditions can leaders create, and which can they only influence?

CSC Practical Tools

Download the Practical Tools: Fillable and editable versions of the tools in this section are available online ResultsMatter.life.

Tool 1 | School Readiness and Conditions Snapshot

Use this tool before launch, expansion, or renewal to distinguish genuine readiness from interest alone. Complete it with the people who hold decision-making authority and those responsible for day-to-day implementation.

School / organization		**Review date**	
Facilitator		**Leadership participants**	

Readiness scale

0 | NOT IN PLACE	1 | EMERGING	2 | READY WITH CONDITIONS	3 | READY
Absent, unreliable, or outside the school's control.	Partially present; significant development is required.	Sufficient to proceed if named conditions and supports are addressed.	Demonstrated, protected, and supported by evidence and responsible owners.

Rate each condition and cite the evidence supporting the rating.

READINESS CONDITION	EVIDENCE TO EXAMINE	SCORE	EVIDENCE / CONDITION TO ADDRESS
Authorized leadership and decision rights	Named authorities can approve, protect, adjust, and—when necessary—end the work.		
Full-time principal and instructional-leader capacity	A full-time principal and dedicated full-time instructional leader are in place; both understand the model, protect implementation time, and address resistance or nonparticipation as one leadership team.		
Staffing, time, and adult capacity	Required roles are filled; protected time exists for planning, professional learning, data review, and follow-through.		
Curriculum and instructional coherence	Core materials, instructional expectations, interventions, and enrichment are aligned rather than competing.		
Assessment participation and data quality	Rosters, testing conditions, participation, measures, and reporting timelines can produce trustworthy evidence.		
Technology and operational infrastructure	Devices, connectivity, platforms, accounts, privacy, security, procurement, and technical support are workable.		
Whole-child, family, and community conditions	Behavior, belonging, family communication, student supports, and community relationships can reinforce implementation.		
Funding, partner alignment, and ownership	Resources are sufficient; partners are coordinated; school leaders understand what they must own and sustain.		

Tool 1 | Readiness Decision and Conditions

Use the ratings to support judgment—not to replace it. A high total score does not compensate for the absence of essential authority, leadership commitment, reliable evidence, or the capacity to carry out the work.

DECISION FIELD	TEAM RECORD
Readiness total and pattern	Total: _____ / 24 Lowest-rated conditions:
Current strengths to protect	
Conditions required before launch	
Supports a central or external partner must provide	
Responsibilities the school must own from the outset	
Readiness decision	READY / PROCEED WITH CONDITIONS / NOT YET READY Rationale:
Reassessment date and evidence expected	Date: _____ Evidence expected:

Decision rule: Do not begin simply because a school needs support. Begin when the school and its partners can name the conditions, owners, resources, evidence, and protections required for responsible implementation.

Decision authorized by		**Date**	
Implementation owner		**Next review**	

Tool 2 | 90-Day Implementation Priorities Plan

Use this plan after the readiness review to convert broad needs into no more than three protected priorities. Each priority should name the action, owner, support, evidence, and decision that must occur within the cycle.

School / organization		**90-day cycle**	
Plan owner		**Leadership team**	

Planning discipline: Fewer priorities create the conditions for stronger implementation. Protect the work already producing value; do not add an initiative unless the team can identify what will stop, change, or receive less attention.

Priority 1

PLANNING FIELD	TEAM RESPONSE
Priority and 90-day outcome	
Why this matters now	
Days 1–30 | Establish	Action: Owner / support:
Days 31–60 | Implement and learn	Action: Owner / support:
Days 61–90 | Strengthen and verify	Action: Evidence expected:

Priority 2

PLANNING FIELD	TEAM RESPONSE
Priority and 90-day outcome	
Why this matters now	
Days 1–30 | Establish	Action: Owner / support:
Days 31–60 | Implement and learn	Action: Owner / support:

PLANNING FIELD	TEAM RESPONSE
Days 61–90 | Strengthen and verify	Action: Evidence expected:

Tool 2 | Priority 3 and Review Record

Priority 3

PLANNING FIELD	TEAM RESPONSE
Priority and 90-day outcome	
Why this matters now	
Days 1–30 | Establish	Action: Owner / support:
Days 31–60 | Implement and learn	Action: Owner / support:
Days 61–90 | Strengthen and verify	Action: Evidence expected:

Implementation supports and risks

PRIORITY	SUPPORT OR RESOURCE REQUIRED	LIKELY RISK / BARRIER	MITIGATION AND OWNER
1			
2			
3			

30 / 60 / 90-day review record

REVIEW	EVIDENCE EXAMINED	PROGRESS / STATUS	ADJUSTMENT AND NEXT OWNER
DAY 30 Date: _____		ON TRACK / ADJUST / PAUSE	

REVIEW	EVIDENCE EXAMINED	PROGRESS / STATUS	ADJUSTMENT AND NEXT OWNER
DAY 60 Date: _____		ON TRACK / ADJUST / PAUSE	
DAY 90 Date: _____		COMPLETE / CONTINUE / REDESIGN	

Cycle close: Record what changed in practice, what changed in results, what remains uncertain, and which priority—if any—should continue into the next 90-day cycle.

Tool 3 | Data Meeting Protocol and Action Record

Use this protocol to move from data display to disciplined action. Prepare the evidence before the meeting, protect time for interpretation, and end with a small number of responses that have named owners and review dates.

School / team		**Meeting date / cycle**	
Facilitator		**Data prepared by**	

Before the meeting

PREPARATION CHECK	READY?	NOTE / OWNER
Rosters, enrollment, participation, and testing conditions are verified.	YES / NO	
Multiple measures are available; no conclusion rests on a single score.	YES / NO	
Patterns can be examined by student, subgroup, grade, class, and time period.	YES / NO	
Implementation and fidelity evidence is available alongside outcome data.	YES / NO	
Student work or other direct evidence is available when relevant.	YES / NO	
Intervention, enrichment, attendance, and support participation can be confirmed.	YES / NO	

Meeting sequence

STAGE	KEY QUESTION	MEETING RECORD
1 | SEE	What do the data actually show? Name patterns without explaining them yet.	
2 | UNDERSTAND	What may be contributing to the pattern? What evidence supports or challenges the explanation?	
3 | RESPOND	Which practice, support, grouping, resource, or condition should change first?	
4 | MONITOR	What evidence will show whether the response is being implemented and is producing value?	
5 | OWN	Who is responsible, what support is required, and when will the team review the evidence?	

Tool 3 | Action Record

EVIDENCE SUMMARY	TEAM RECORD
Strength or improvement to protect	
Priority gap or unexpected pattern	
Students, groups, grades, or practices requiring focus	
Underlying condition or working hypothesis	

Action commitments

STUDENT / GROUP / PRACTICE	INSTRUCTIONAL OR SUPPORT ADJUSTMENT	OWNER / START	PROGRESS MEASURE	REVIEW DATE

CLOSING QUESTION	TEAM RECORD
What will change tomorrow or this week?	
Who needs to receive the decision or support?	
Next meeting and evidence due	Date: _____ Evidence due:

Action standard: Every commitment should name the practice or support that will change, the responsible owner, the evidence to be examined, and the date for review.

Tool 4 | Classroom Walkthrough and Implementation-Fidelity Tool

Use brief, repeated walkthroughs to identify schoolwide patterns in implementation. Record only what is observed; combine walkthrough evidence with planning, coaching, student-work, and outcome evidence before drawing conclusions.

School / date / observer		**Grade / subject / setting**	
Program or initiative		**Current implementation focus**	

Observation scale

0 | NOT OBSERVED	1 | EMERGING / INCONSISTENT	2 | EVIDENT / CONSISTENT	N/O | NOT OBSERVABLE
Expected practice was not evident during the visit.	Some elements were evident, but use or quality was uneven.	Expected practice was clear, coherent, and supported by evidence.	The indicator could not reasonably be observed in this visit.

IMPLEMENTATION INDICATOR	EVIDENCE OBSERVED	RATING
Grade-level learning target and appropriately demanding task		0 / 1 / 2 / N/O
Materials and lesson sequence align with the adopted curriculum or program		0 / 1 / 2 / N/O
Modeling, explicit instruction, guided practice, or gradual release are used as appropriate		0 / 1 / 2 / N/O
Checks for understanding produce an observable instructional response		0 / 1 / 2 / N/O
Differentiation, intervention, or enrichment responds to learner evidence		0 / 1 / 2 / N/O
Students demonstrate engagement, agency, productive discourse, or ownership		0 / 1 / 2 / N/O
Climate, routines, behavior supports, and belonging protect learning time		0 / 1 / 2 / N/O
Technology and data are used purposefully when expected—not as ends in themselves		0 / 1 / 2 / N/O

Tool 4 | Pattern and Follow-Through

PATTERN QUESTION	EVIDENCE ACROSS VISITS
Strengths and coherent practices to protect	
Patterns that are emerging but not yet consistent	
Inconsistencies or gaps requiring attention	
Likely system barriers—time, materials, training, leadership, technology, or competing demands	

Follow-through

ACTION	OWNER	SUPPORT REQUIRED	EVIDENCE AND REVIEW DATE

Use with care: This tool is designed to examine system implementation and guide support. It should not be used as an individual teacher-evaluation instrument unless that purpose and process have been explicitly established.

Tool 5 | Ownership and Transition Checklist

Use this checklist before a grant, partnership, leadership transition, or intensive support cycle ends. The goal is to distinguish activity that has occurred from routines, decisions, knowledge, and resources the school can actually sustain.

School / organization		**Transition or review date**	
Current partner / support		**School transition owner**	

Ownership status

SCHOOL-OWNED	SHARED AND STABLE	EXTERNALLY DEPENDENT	VULNERABLE
School leaders and staff can carry out, monitor, and improve the work.	Responsibilities are clear and the continuing partnership is intentional and resourced.	Essential knowledge, authority, routines, or resources remain outside the school.	The function is likely to weaken or stop if conditions change.

FUNCTION	CURRENT STATUS	EVIDENCE AND SITE OWNER	CONTINUING SUPPORT REQUIRED
Instructional leadership and decision-making			
Curriculum use and implementation fidelity			
Assessment administration, data quality, and data use			
Professional learning, coaching, and leader development			
Behavior, belonging, and student-support systems			
Family and community communication and engagement			
Technology, accounts, privacy, security, and platform administration			
Vendor and partner management			
Budgeting, procurement, compliance, and reporting			

Tool 5 | Transition Plan and Risk Register

Responsibilities and routines to transfer

RESPONSIBILITY / ROUTINE	NEW OWNER	EVIDENCE OF TRANSFER	TARGET DATE	VERIFIED

Continuing external support

SUPPORT	WHY IT CONTINUES	FUNDED / MANAGED BY	REVIEW OR EXIT DATE

Risk register

VULNERABILITY / TRIGGER	MITIGATION AND OWNER	EVIDENCE / REVIEW DATE

FINAL OWNERSHIP ASSESSMENT	NEXT REVIEW
SCHOOL-OWNED / SHARED AND STABLE / VULNERABLE OR DEPENDENT Rationale:	Date: _____ Owner:

Complete the picture: Use this checklist with the CSC Capstone Sustainability Milestone Rubric that follows. The checklist identifies ownership and transition actions; the rubric supports a broader judgment about sustainability.

CSC CAPSTONE SUSTAINABILITY MILESTONE RUBRIC

PURPOSE & USE

Assess school readiness to sustain CSC-aligned academic and behavioral systems and supports after 2026. Milestones are verified through documented evidence and site-based review.

CLOSEOUT TARGET

Average score of 3 by June 2026, with no milestone below 2.

SCORING SCALE	4 EXCEEDED	3 FULLY MET	2 MOSTLY MET	1 PARTIALLY MET	0 NOT MET

MILESTONE	MILESTONE IS ACHIEVED WHEN	SAMPLE EVIDENCE SOURCES
01 Instructional Leadership	A full-time principal and a dedicated full-time site-based instructional leader (for example, a VP of Instruction or Instructional Coach) are in place as a coordinated leadership team. The instructional leader actively leads data meetings, walkthroughs, coaching, implementation fidelity, and intervention tracking.	• Leadership chart with distinct, fully resourced principal and instructional-leader roles • Evidence of protected instructional-leadership time and authority • Data-meeting products • Walkthrough forms with clear teacher feedback • Coaching artifacts • Real-time intervention tracking
02 Budget Infrastructure	The site has a sustainable budget strategy for curriculum and instructional materials aligned to long-term implementation needs.	• Multiyear budget with curriculum line items • Completed curriculum procurement-cycle records • Budget-planning schedule and summaries • Written principal or pastor commitment to continued curriculum investment
03 Data Fluency	Site leaders independently collect, manage, analyze, and interpret academic, behavioral, and climate data. They use digital tools to communicate impact, guide decisions, lead meetings, and plan for future success.	• Data used in retreats and coaching/planning sessions • Trimester summaries and 2026-2031 plans reflecting decreasing CSC support • Visualizations used with faculty, students, and families to guide instruction • Dashboards maintained by site leaders for instructional decisions • Teacher action plans based on academic, behavioral, and climate data • Leadership confirmation of accurate interpretation and communication
04 Sustainability Plan	A written plan is in place and actively used, defining responsibilities, routines, and timelines for sustaining CSC-aligned practices after CSC.	• Completed plan using the CSC template • Implementation timeline with embedded routines • Evidence of active use in agendas or internal check-ins • Staff communications referencing plan components
05 Sitewide Culture & Expectations	The site clearly articulates and consistently reinforces expectations aligned to a data-driven Whole Child model across instruction, behavior, social-emotional supports, and family engagement. Staff can explain the expectations, and leaders monitor their use.	• Posted classroom expectations, outcomes, and rubrics • Pacing guides reflected in lesson plans and monitored in daily instruction • Behavior-support artifacts in active use, including Calming Corners and Praise Protocols • Student-led conferences, portfolios, and family-engagement tools in use • Faculty review of school culture, student needs, and supportive services • School-climate and staff-consistency survey feedback

SCORING GUIDANCE

Trimester reviews; final review May 2026.

CAPACITY IS EVIDENCE, NOT PERMANENCE

Use the rubric to distinguish what is embedded, what remains vulnerable, and what still depends on leaders, funding, infrastructure, or expertise.

Appendices

The online version of this blueprint is available at ResultsMatter.life and includes additional information, forms, references, and appendices. The appendices include a glossary, technical architecture, sample dashboards, policies, assessment explanations, and information about programs and platforms.

Internal CSC Data Sources. Unless otherwise noted, CSC program data, assessment results, school-level evidence, and longitudinal comparisons presented in this Blueprint are drawn from Catholic Schools Collaborative Data Summaries and School Plans prepared between 2017 and 2026. CSC developed these internal working records in collaboration with participating schools, and they are not publicly available.

Assessment Measures and Technical Documentation. Assessment measures, score types, terminology, and technical conventions used throughout this Blueprint—including measures such as Normal Curve Equivalent (NCE), percentile rank, scaled scores, Lexile measures, and Quantile measures—reflect the technical documentation and user guidance provided by the assessment and instructional programs used by CSC and participating schools between 2017 and 2026. CSC maintained an extensive collection of vendor manuals, technical guides, administration materials, and program documentation used to implement and interpret these programs. Because these materials served as ongoing technical references rather than individual sources for specific claims, they are not separately cited unless a particular document is directly quoted or substantively relied upon.

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EVERY STUDENT. EVERY DAY.

The CSC Blueprint captures more than a decade of learning, partnership, and innovation in Catholic education.

It offers a clear, practical roadmap for schools and partners to design integrated systems that strengthen leadership, advance academic excellence, nurture the whole child, and engage families and communities.

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